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"Upward Bound is College Bound": Pre-College Outreach Programs' Sponsorship of Academic Writing

Shauna Wight

University of New Hampshire, Durham

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“UPWARD BOUND IS COLLEGE BOUND”: PRE-COLLEGE OUTREACH
PROGRAMS’ SPONSORSHIP OF ACADEMIC WRITING

BY

Shauna Wight

Baccalaureate of Science Degree, Utah State University, 2004

Master of Arts Degree, University of Utah, 2010

DISSERTATION

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This thesis/dissertation has been examined and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Ph.D. in English by:

Dissertation Director, Christina Ortmeier-Hooper,
Assistant Professor of English

Thomas Newkirk, Professor of English

Alecia Magnifico, Assistant Professor of English

Cristy Beemer, Assistant Professor of English

Jessica Early, Associate Professor of English, Arizona
State University

On April 1, 2015

Original approval signatures are on file with the University of New Hampshire Graduate School.

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ABSTRACT

“UPWARD BOUND IS COLLEGE BOUND”:

PRE-COLLEGE OUTREACH PROGRAMS’ SPONSORSHIP OF ACADEMIC WRITING

by

Shauna Wight

University of New Hampshire, May, 2015

This study examines how Upward Bound (UB), a federally-funded pre-college outreach program for underrepresented students, impacted participants’ access to academic writing and higher education. Based on the perspective that writing practices both reflect and shape identity, I constructed a series of case studies that followed five linguistically and culturally diverse students from the Upward Bound summer program to determine how this intervention impacted their identifications with academic writing during their senior year of high school and the college admissions process.

This year-long qualitative study used transcribed student interviews and focus groups along with writing samples as primary data sources. These sources were then triangulated with visual artifacts, institutional documents, fieldnotes from observations in the high schools and UB, and transcribed interviews with key informants, such as teachers and advisors. Based on themes emerging within and across the case studies, I turned to the following theoretical perspectives to analyze the sociocultural influences on participants’ writing practices and identities: difference as resource, Communities of Practice, performance, and literacy sponsorship. As analytical frameworks, these theories allowed me to analyze how the unique and often conflicting writing practices participants experienced in their homes, high schools, and UB shaped their writerly identities and educational trajectories.

Findings revealed that UB provided a sort of liminal time and space, betwixt and between high school and college, home and school. Due to this unique context, the practices and identities participants developed within the program did not always transfer to the writing they experienced during high school and the admissions process. For instance, the participants found that the authentic writing and social supports they experienced within the program helped them to gain confidence, motivation, and rhetorical awareness as writers. However, limited resources and tracking within their high schools disrupted these trajectories, resulting in a loss of confidence and motivation. Similarly, participants were able to draw on linguistic and cultural resources to write their college admissions essay. However, over the course of the admissions process, the gatekeeping function of college admissions and scholarship essays turned these cultural connections to conflicts.

This study bears significant implications for several groups of educators. It suggests that traditional educational institutions and pre-college outreach programs could benefit from working together in order to promote transfer of learning and to better support the many students not served by these programs. It also suggests that literacy reforms need to establish opportunity-to-learn standards in order to give districts, schools, and teachers the material resources they need to help all students achieve the same outcomes. English educators and high school writing teachers can use insights from this study to create safe communities of writers and to use information about students' needs, strengths, and interests to develop authentic and culturally-relevant writing experiences. Finally, writing program administrators and first-year writing instructors should familiarize themselves with their students' high school writing experiences and avoid perpetuating the stigmatizing institutional policies and identities they may have experienced there.

Chapter I

The Continuum between High School and College Writing

A Bachelor's degree is no longer considered a simple stepping stone to a better life. It is the gatekeeper to a myriad of social and individual benefits, ranging from income, employment, stability, and occupational prestige to engagement in civic and political activities. (Cabrera, Burkham, & LaNasa, 2000, p. 155)

A college degree is vital in today's knowledge economy. College graduates earn 74% more than high school graduates, and by 2018, estimates suggest that 63% of all jobs will require a postsecondary education (Carnevale & Rose, 2011; Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2010). Despite these increasing demands, students whose parents do not hold a bachelor's degree remain half as likely as their continuing-generation peers to enroll in college or persist toward a degree (Engle, Bermeo, & O'Brien, 2006). Such disparities suggest that parental education can have a trickle-down effect that opens or curtails the educational opportunities of multiple generations. These achievement gaps, along with concerns regarding the nation's global competitiveness, have fueled multiple educational reforms aimed at improving postsecondary access and success for underrepresented populations.

While past reforms, such as No Child Left Behind, focused almost exclusively on reading, writing's role in college access and success has gained increased attention among politicians and policy makers. In 2002, the College Board launched the National Commission on Writing in an effort to emphasize writing instruction in school reform movements and to prepare for the 2005 release of the SAT writing section. Likewise, the Common Core Standards Initiative has included both writing standards and assessments as part of its effort to promote "college and career readiness" (NGA & CCSO, 2014). Despite their laudable goal

to improve writing instruction and increase college completion rates, such reforms do not fully account for the contextual influences that shape writing instruction at both the high school and college level¹. Equally troubling, many of these reforms call for increased standardization and more high-stakes testing, often ignoring the social and material inequalities that created such achievement gaps in the first place.

Responding to such oversights, this chapter lays the initial groundwork for this longitudinal, qualitative study on how Upward Bound, a precollege outreach program for low-income and first-generation college students', impacted participants' literacy development and access to postsecondary institutions. This chapter provides the impetus for the case studies I designed to follow five linguistically and culturally diverse first-generation students from the Upward Bound program through their senior year of high school and the college admissions process. To do this, I first consider the types of writing students need to enter and succeed within the university in order to question *how* or even *if* they can prepare for college-level writing while still in high school. To support my assertion that first-generation college students often need additional resources to navigate this transition, I will then highlight the gatekeeping function academic writing often plays in their educational trajectories. Finally, I argue that, while relatively unexplored within composition or literacy scholarship, many precollege outreach programs provide a liminal space for underrepresented students that can open new gateways for understanding this continuum between high school and college writing. Examining how local and national policies have shaped these students'

¹ While the College Board (2008) claimed that the writing section provided predictive validity for college success and promoted writing instruction in high schools, Perelman (2008; 2014) argued that this test emphasized formulaic writing over content. In response to increasing criticism, the College Board decided to make the writing section optional starting in 2016. Much like the writing section of the SAT, the writing assessments for the Common Core sparked controversy when PARCC announced plans to use computer grading.

access the academic writing, this chapter also offers the rationale for the theoretical framework I construct in the next chapter, “A Socially-Situated Theoretical Framework for Identity and Literacy.”

Given the attention politicians and policy makers have paid to preparing high school students for college-level writing, securing a place for literacy educators and the students themselves in this conversation has become increasingly important. For this reason a number of scholarly publications have explored this issue. Leading professional organizations have also recently collaborated to create “Frameworks for Success in Postsecondary Writing” (CWPA, NCTE, & NWP, 2011). Highlighting the value in articulating expectations across institutions, this framework points to the experiences and habits of mind that prepare students for the writing, reading, and critical thinking required within credit-bearing college courses. Despite the value of these contributions, many of these policies, books, and articles on the continuum between high school and college writing contain anecdotal impressions, not empirical research. As such, little is currently known about how students experience this transition or what can be done to support them (Harklau, 2001; Hesse, 2009). The limited amount of scholarship that has been generated generally considers the writing needed for college access and success. By synthesizing different perspectives in this conversation, I hope to emphasize that, while high schools and colleges are very distinct institutions that require different types of writing instruction, teachers can and should help students negotiate institutional differences.

Writing and College Access: Admissions Essays and Placement Exams

As Yancey (2011) has pointed out, postsecondary literacy demands begin before students even enter the university. The first of these tasks is the college admissions essay, and as a recent survey (NACAC, 2011) indicates, this piece of writing is becoming increasingly important for determining college admissions. In 1993, for instance, 14% of institutions rated

the college essay of considerable importance. By 2010, this percentage had increased to 27% (p. 23). Recent scholarship on the college admissions essay has highlighted the unique rhetorical context surrounding this genre, the strategies students use to distinguish themselves from other applicants, and ways to use rhetorical genre theories to develop workshops for underrepresented populations.

In the earliest of these studies, Paley (1995) gathered think-aloud protocols as students composed their college admissions essays and as college admissions officers read them in order to analyze the unique rhetorical context surrounding this genre. She found that the college admissions essay represents a paradox, passing off a conflictive rhetorical context as peaceful one. Calling this piece of writing a test of “emotional literacy,” Paley has argued that despite the imperatives to relax and open up, college admissions officers emphasized the importance of mechanical correctness and an ability to simultaneously stand out from the applicant pool while blending in with the university’s values (p. 86). Despite her initial predictions that students would hesitate to reveal personal information, only one student fell into this category, writing a creative essay that was praised by her audience for being well written while also being heavily criticized for revealing too little. Based on these findings, Paley concluded that college admissions essays demand mannered prose with the appearance of spontaneity and strategic self-presentation.

Vidali (2007) has complicated Paley’s research in her study of college students who wrote about disability within their college admissions essay. Using embodied rhetorics and freak show theories, Vidali’s findings balanced acts of student agency with conformity. Examining how three female students drew upon both existing and unexpected rhetorical tropes in their essays, Vidali found that, much like performers in freak shows who highlighted their differences for material gain, these students’ decisions to disclose their disabilities reflected strategic attempts to manipulate the application process. In carrying out

this strategy, two of the students conformed to conventions surrounding disability narratives, emphasizing their personal experiences and ability to overcome obstacles. The third student challenged these tropes, identifying disability as a social condition that she would experience for the rest of her life. Whether adhering to or challenging these conventions, these students' rhetorical strategies were neither inherently empowering nor disempowering. On the one hand, self-disclosure possibly helped students attend the university; on the other, this decision remained a personal risk that could also affirm popular stereotypes.

While Paley (1995) and Vidali (2006) both worked with students who, in many ways, already understood the rhetorical situation surrounding the college admissions essays, more recent studies have attempted to demystify this genre for underrepresented populations. In order to give students the writing capital they needed to enter college, Early & DeCosta (2011, 2012) analyzed a corpus of successful college admissions essays, identifying key features of this genre. During a six-week workshop, they helped students incorporate these features and to better understand the audience and purpose. Findings revealed that students did, in fact, gain new cultural capital, acquiring skills and abilities that could enhance their social mobility. However, they also drew upon their own linguistic and cultural resources. In many ways, then, participating in this workshop helped students affirm their values while also negotiating academic demands.

In a similar study, Warren (2013) created a workshop for low-income and ethnic minority students that emphasized audience awareness and persuasive writing. Conceptualizing the college admissions essay as an argument, Warren taught students to identify values shared with the audience and use anecdotes as evidence of their strengths. To measure the impact of this intervention, Warren compared the essays that emerged from this workshop to those written by a control group, who received instruction based on popular how-to guides. Findings showed that admissions officers scored workshop essays

significantly higher. The admissions officers' commentary on these ratings indicated a preference for essays that made an argument, incorporated ample evidence, and exemplified institutional values.

Taken together, these studies suggest that the college admissions essay is misleading and that teachers can increase students' confidence and success by helping them analyze the genre or rhetorical situation. These empirical studies draw much needed attention to the challenges students face when entering the university and the instructional methods teachers can use to help them. However, more research is still needed. For instance, little is currently known about students' experiences with scholarship essays and other literacy demands surrounding college admissions. Additionally, current research has not considered how contextual influences affect the way these genres are interpreted or produced across multiple settings. This study begins to address some of these gaps.

Much like the college admissions essay, placement exams for composition courses require an ability to correctly identify and conform to academic values with little explicit guidance. In his landmark article, "Inventing the University," Bartholomae (1985) reviewed 500 essays written for placement exams. Comparing essays deemed proficient and remedial, Bartholomae discovered that successful essays rejected popular commonplaces in favor of the agonistic ones used within academic discourse. Examining rater responses to entrance examinations at Temple University, Sullivan (1997) likewise found that students who already knew how to respond to the invisible demands of the task held a distinct advantage. Deviating from the criteria listed on the scoring guide, readers gave higher ratings to essays that contained references to canonical literature, despite similarities in focus, organization, and development. Based on these findings, Sullivan argued that readers were evaluating "the social identities constructed in students' texts" as much as the texts themselves (p. 74). Even after being admitted into the university, then, high-stakes writing demands can continue to

disrupt students' educational trajectories, siphoning them off to remedial coursework that often does not count for their degrees.

Collectively, this body of research on college admissions essays and placement exams moves beyond perspectives of writing that emphasize a set of discrete skills or knowledge needed to produce a successful text. Instead, they highlight the issues of power, identity, and ideology students must grapple with before they even take their first college course. Even if students successfully navigate these hurdles, such issues will continue to influence their experiences actually writing in college. While students need help negotiating this transition, scholars and teachers struggle to support them due to the institutional and disciplinary differences in teaching writing.

Writing for College Success: Negotiating Institutional Differences

Most scholarship on how to help students transition to college-level writing acknowledges disciplinary and institutional differences but disagrees on how or if they can be bridged. Sullivan (2003, 2006), for instance, notes the difficulty in identifying common standards for college-level writing and using them to develop preparatory coursework in high schools and developmental writing programs. Still, he indicates that finding common ground would be worthwhile since reading and writing are “threshold skills” necessary for success in mainstream college classes (Sullivan, 2005, p.8). Specifically, he feels that these shared expectations would help instructors and WPAs determine if students are prepared for mainstream courses and to secure funding for developmental courses.

Likewise noting the value of common standards in college readiness, Graff and Birkenstein-Graff (2009) assert that many high school teachers are unable to prepare students for college-level writing because university instructors do not make their expectations explicit. As a result, college teachers expect students to position themselves in scholarly conversations using disciplinary conventions while high school colleagues emphasize

literature, personal writing, and grammar. In order to help students assimilate, Graff and Birkenstein-Graff suggest that both high school and college teachers focus on agonistic discourse, proposing, “The name of the game in academia is argument” (p. W410). The influence of this argument has been pervasive, and the Common Core ELA standards cite this article in support of emphasizing persuasive writing in high school (NGA & CCSO, 2014).

While anecdotal, in many ways their emphasis on argumentation is borne out by empirical research. Yancey, Fisherman, Gresham, Neal, and Taylor (2005), for instance, conducted a large-scale survey to provide a picture of postsecondary literacy demands. Receiving 1,800 responses from all faculty ranks and institutional types, they found that the majority of college writing teachers emphasize multi-draft writing within persuasive genres. If identifying salient features of college-level writing is possible, as these arguments seem to suggest, making these expectations explicit would seem to be an obvious first step.

However, a large body of scholarship calls this premise into question. While acknowledging the value in demystifying college teachers’ hidden expectations, Farris (2009) believes that this is not enough to bridge the cultural divide between high school and college because knowing what is expected and how to teach it are two different matters. Instead, she calls for collaborative professionalization that moves beyond just swapping syllabi to interacting with colleagues in other institutions. Working with concurrent enrollment teachers, she has found that high school teachers have little experience with the inquiry-based writing colleges expect. Based on this premise, she argues that when high school teachers have opportunities to take composition courses at the university, they develop skills in their own writing that they can share with their students.

While greater collaboration between high schools and colleges is valuable, this emphasis on demystifying the expectations of college teachers for their colleagues at the high school can present several problems. Such approaches run the risk of reproducing power

hierarchies by adapting a unilateral approach that places the onus on high school teachers to conform to what college teachers want or expect. Such approaches are rarely effective because of the different material conditions, populations, and aims at each institution. As both a high school and college English instructor, Mustenikova Mosley (2006) argues that the problem in articulating high school and college level writing is not high school teachers' unfamiliarity with academic discourse. After all, as she points out, they are college graduates themselves. Rather, upon entering the real world of high school teaching, "All theories and practical applications that college English instructors swear by go out the window because college theory and high school practice differ greatly (p. 60). For example, while many college writing teachers criticize formulaic writing, high school teachers continue to teach the five-paragraph theme due to high-stakes testing, the numbers of papers they have to grade, and the challenges faced by their students. Instead, of adopting a unilateral model, she calls for a bilateral exchange in which high school and college teachers learn from each other and come to understand their different realities.

Findings from empirical studies also challenge the belief that making high school literacy more like college will better prepare students. In one of very few naturalistic studies of the literate transition from high school to college, Harklau (2001) drew upon multiple situated theories of literacy to collect and analyze data from four linguistic minority students during both their last semester of high school and first semester of college. Her findings revealed that, rather than being a watered-down version of what these students experienced in college, their high school literacy demands were often appropriate responses to different institutional populations and values. For instance, she observed that high school teachers often spent more time monitoring and scaffolding literacy practices since their students' self-regulation and engagement could not be assumed. Furthermore, she discovered that college literacy demands were not necessarily more complex or extensive than those students

experienced in high school. The participants in her study completed more extended writing in their high school classes than their introductory college classes despite the centrality on essayistic writing in college composition research. Such findings complicate the Yancey et al. (2005) study, showing that while many first-year composition teachers may indeed value elaborated, multidraft arguments, this type of literacy might be less prominent in the other college classes freshman students take. Based on these findings, Harklau calls into question the premises behind placement testing and developmental courses that single out certain students as being unprepared for the rigors of college writing. Attempts to identify standards of college writing or to teach it in them in high schools, then, could potentially do more harm than good.

Helping students get into college and succeed once there presents several challenges. Expectations of what students are supposed to learn or be able to do are often unclear and inherently varied. Furthermore, as the next section of this chapter will argue, conflicts of power and identity present first-generation college students with additional barriers. Instead of identifying common standards for college writing and teaching them in high schools, teachers' efforts may be better spent in helping students negotiate multiple demands and the social meanings and identities they entail. However, given the way they have often been socially and institutionally positioned, first-generation college students may find such negotiations particularly difficult.

The Paradox of Access and Academic Writing

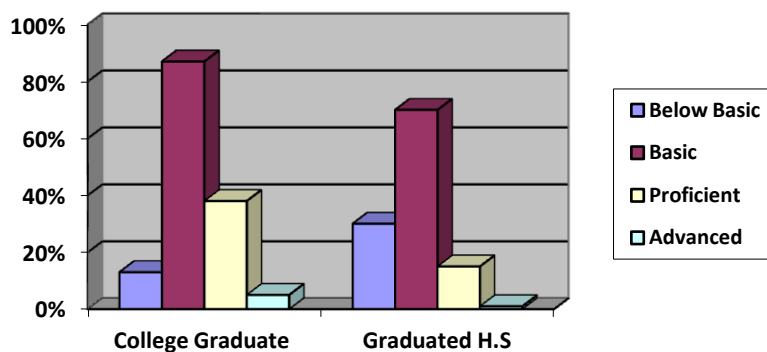
American Meritocracy is validated and sustained by the deep-rooted belief in equal opportunity. But can we really say that kids like those I taught have equal access to America's educational resources? Consider not only the economic and political barriers they face, but the fact, too, that judgments about their ability are made at a very young age, and those judgments, accurate or not, affect the curriculum they receive, their place in the school, the way they're defined institutionally. The insidious part of this drama is that, in the observance of this breach, students unwittingly play right into the assessments. (Rose, 1989, p. 128)

I begin this section with Rose's critique of the American educational system because it highlights the three main factors that have impeded first-generation college students' access to academic literacy and higher education: social identities, educational policies, and institutional labels. Research on first-generation college students has shown that they are often ethnic and linguistic minorities who come from low-income households (Engle, 2007; Engle, Bermeo & O'Brien, 2006; Harklau & Kanno, 2012). Indeed, as I describe in detail in chapter 3, "Methodology and Research Design," the majority of participants in this study are linguistic minorities. Consequently, in considering the academic preparation first-generation students received prior to college, it is useful to consult studies on the secondary school experiences of these non-dominant populations. For this reason, both this section and the theoretical paradigms explored within the next chapter draw heavily on L2 scholarship.

Rose's work shows that these barriers have a longstanding history within the U.S. education system. However, given the recent push for standardization and accountability measures, schools have become more exclusive than ever, and testing, tracking, and low expectations continue to act as a triple threat to non-dominant students' educational trajectories. Research on the effects of recent accountability measures shows that high-stakes testing has had a deleterious effect on writing instruction by encouraging teachers to focus

almost exclusively on reading, which is easier to test (Enright & Gilliland, 2011). When writing assessments are in place, they often pressure teachers into providing presentational, formulaic instruction in a narrow range of genres (Hillocks, 2002). Despite this emphasis on teaching to the test, large-scale writing assessments still reveal significant achievement gaps in writing among underrepresented populations. On the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test, students’ writing achievement correlated significantly with parental education levels (see Figure 1.1). Similarly, the ACT has shown that more than 50% or more of certain minority groups don’t meet readiness benchmarks for college composition courses.

Figure 1.1. NAEP writing achievement scores correlated with parental education



These tests are often used to segregate these students into low level coursework where they encounter an even narrower range of genres. Receiving remedial instruction impedes students’ ability to advance to college preparatory courses where they could encounter a richer writing curriculum, creating what Ortmeier-Hooper & Enright (2011) have referred to as a “cycle of inopportunity” (p. 175). Additionally, given these institutional labels and rote curricula, many students in lower track classes become disengaged with school and, due to scheduling constraints, rarely interact with academically motivated peers (Davidson, 1996;

Enright, 2013; Enright & Gilliland, 2011; Fu, 1995; Harklau, 1994; Oakes, 2005; Rose, 1989). Essentially, they begin to internalize the identity of remedial student.

These in-school trajectories have significant implications for students' post-secondary opportunities. Research on students whose parents never attended college has shown that they are less likely to get encouragement from school personnel, parents, or peers to attend college. As a result, only 46% of these students aspired towards a college degree. Even out of this number of students who did aspire towards a degree, only 33% were at least minimally academically prepared to do so (Choy, Horn, Nunez, & Chen, 2000). Based on such findings, institutional labels and the identities they entail prove to be one of the most significant barriers to advanced education

If these students manage to graduate from high school and enroll in a postsecondary institution, the picture is not much brighter as 20% of first-generation college students never earn a degree (Chen, 2005). Research has shown that first-generation college students are more likely to attend two-year institutions, take remedial coursework, live off campus, and work full-time, all risk factors for attrition (Engle, 2007). While inadequate academic preparation, limited social support, and the lack of financial resources may be partially to blame for this phenomenon, socio-cultural factors seem to be even more salient.

First-generation college students typically spend less time on campus and are less involved in social and cultural events than their peers (Engle, Bermeo, & O'Brien, 2006; Grayson, 1997; Rose, 1989). This social isolation and cultural alienation pose significant problems for students because social networks can often provide academic resources. For instance, first-generation college students have reported finding their college instructors unsympathetic and uninterested. As such, they are less likely to seek the extra help or individualized attention they need from instructors. Students' sense of alienation on campus follows them once they return to their communities and interact with friends, neighbors, and

family members who do not understand their new experiences and values (Harklau, 2001; Penrose, 2002).

Penrose (2001) has argued that these findings have significant implications for college composition teachers. Using data drawn from both quantitative and case-study research to compare first and continuing-generation students' perceptions of academic discourse, she has found that first-generation students had less confidence in their writing abilities and that this confidence deteriorated as they progressed throughout their university education. However, their grades in FYC were no lower than those of their continuing-generation peers. Penrose has suggested these discrepancies between performance and confidence reflect these students' awareness of differences between the languages and identities they draw on at home and schools. Based on this interpretation, she has concluded that "writing teachers and researchers need to continue to explore pedagogies that will concentrate their efforts not just on validating personal identity or demystifying the conventions of academic communities but also on helping students forge identities as members of these communities" (p. 459).

In many ways, however, forging an identity as a member of this academic community may be more problematic than Penrose's recommendation implies. Collecting forty-six literacy autobiographies along with interview data, LeCourt (2004) found that the transition to college writing caused the basic writers in her study to see academic writing as distant, inaccessible, and restrictive to their preferred ways of expression. In contrast, their descriptions of previous experiences with schooled writing reflected a greater sense of control and power. However, even these past identifications with academic writing suggested that it influenced their students thinking and use of language in ways they could not prevent. For instance, female and working-class students sought to minimize identifications with their gender or class. Racial minorities fractured their identities, relying on academic writing in public situations and community-based forms of expression in their private lives. Members of

all three groups reported losing some social relations, perspectives, and forms of expression as a result of their identifications with schooled writing. Yet, they made these sacrifices in order to gain the social and material capital associated with academic writing.

Despite their cultural resources, then, too many first-generation students continue to be marginalized by academic writing to low-rung coursework that offers little opportunity for transformation. In order to transform these trajectories, students need greater access and agency over academic writing. By encouraging rigorous coursework, providing supplemental writing instruction among academically motivated peers, and demystifying high-stakes writing assessments, pre-college outreach programs can potentially accelerate this social and discursive transformation.

Pre-College Outreach Programs and Possibilities for Transformation

Currently, identifying possibilities for transformation in pre-college outreach programs remains difficult due to both their sheer diversity and the general lack of empirical research. Despite sharing an overarching goal to help underrepresented students enroll in college and complete a degree, pre-college outreach programs vary in their sponsors, sites, target populations and services provided. These contextual factors are important to explore as they have significant implications for how programs might influence students' identifications with academic literacy.

According to the College Board's (2000) National Survey of Outreach Programs, over half are funded by federal or state agencies. Out of all outreach programs, TRIO remains the largest and most longstanding. TRIO originated from Upward Bound (UB), created by the federal government in 1964 as part of the Economic Opportunity Act. By 1965, The Higher Education Act authorized a similar, but less intensive program, Talent Search. Eventually, a cluster of eight programs emerged within TRIO to assist veterans and non-traditional students, target math instruction, and give support services during both undergraduate and

graduate studies. Upward Bound continues to receive the most funding out of these programs and serves approximately 60,000 participants per year (Curtain & Curtain, 2001; U.S. Dept. of Education, 2014). Apart from TRIO, the federal government also funds Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), and several states—most notably California, Texas and Florida—have formed their own outreach efforts. Despite the dominance of government run programs, nearly one third are sponsored by postsecondary institutions and networks, such as Puente and CUNY’s College Now, and private foundations like “I Have a Dream” (IHAD) and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) (College Board, 2001).

These funding agencies exert a powerful influence on the context of the programs, often determining the site, target population, and individual program components. While postsecondary institutions house a large number (46%), elementary and secondary schools (37%) offer the second most popular site (College Board, 2001). Postsecondary institutions, where the majority of TRIO programs are based, offer the benefit of helping students navigate a college campus (Curtain & Curtain, 2001). However, programs like AVID, IHAD and GEAR UP that operate in a school or community site take a more cohort-based approach that helps students develop social capital within their own schools and communities (Tierney, 2000).

Most programs recruit high school students based on ethnicity, linguistic background, socioeconomic status, and parents’ educational levels. UB, for instance, requires that 2/3 of all participants be both low-income or potential first-generation college students, while the remaining 1/3 can come from either category. In recent years, however, research has underscored the benefits of targeting the most academically at-risk students (e.g. those with the lowest G.P.A.), so the federal government has been directing funding towards programs that recruit this subgroup (Curtain & Curtain, 2001).

Finally, although almost all programs provide services to enhance college and career readiness, social development, and academic support, their delivery, timing, and intensity vary. Many bridge programs offered by colleges, for instance, only occur during the summer before students' freshman year; however, the vast majority (67%) offer year-round services before students enter their senior year (College Board, 2001).

Although there are a number of challenges to accurately evaluating the impact of pre-college outreach programs, existing data has generally been positive. Participants in UB, GEAR-UP, Talent Search, IHAD, and Puente have significantly higher college enrollment rates than control groups (ARETE, 2001; Curtain & Curtain, 2001; Engle, 2007; Gandara, 2002). Studies have also associated attitudinal and behavioral changes with these programs, including higher educational aspirations, an ability to resist peer pressure, and greater resiliency (ARETE, 2001; Kahne & Bailey, 1999). However, many studies revealed negligible improvement in students' G.P.A.s and test scores, a finding some researchers attribute to the late stage of many interventions when students' educational trajectories are fairly entrenched (Curtain & Curtain, 2001; Gandara, 2002)². Studies with mixed educational outcomes also attribute these negligible gains to challenges with implementation, difficulties maintaining support systems, and the brief duration of some programs (Black, Little, McCoach, Purcell, 2008; Barnett et al., 2012)

Determining the magnitude of any one program component apart from other variables impacting students' educational trajectories has proven challenging. Consequently, little is known about which elements are most important. For instance, in a special issue of *Educational Policy*, contributors attributed positive outcomes in the Puente high school project to a combination of factors, including culturally relevant instruction, rigorous

² Research on IHAD is a notable exception to this trend with participants showing improvements in both their G.P.A.s and standardized test scores (ARETE Corp., 2001).

academic preparation, mentoring, parental involvement, and teacher training (Cazden, 2002; Gonzalez & Moll, 2002; Pradl, 2002; Tierney, 2002) . Similarly, while Kahne and Bailey (1999) found that AVID participants' high school graduation rates were twice as high as a control groups, they noted that these outcomes could have resulted from both the social capital gained and the program's emphasis on placing students in parochial schools.

Despite the difficulty in determining which particular program elements are most important, Corwin, Coylar, & Tierney (2005) have argued that doing so is crucial in helping these often understaffed, underfunded programs make the best use of their resources. Synthesizing the limited amount of research on precollege outreach programs, they found that academic preparation was most directly tied to college enrollment and degree completion. While parental involvement was another key factor in educational outcomes, the existing research shows that, in contrast to self-reports, few programs actually include this as a main component. An element closely related to family involvement, culturally-relevant instruction, was theoretically sound but often difficult to support through empirical research since it is often integrated into rigorous coursework. Finally, given the scant and sometimes conflicting research on mentors, peer networks, and social activities, no clear-cut patterns emerged. Taken together, then, these studies reveal that while precollege outreach programs are often tied to positive educational outcomes, little is known about what makes them effective or how they can be improved.

This trend is especially true for literacy instruction offered within these programs. Given the central role these programs often play in providing academic literacy instruction, they remain underexplored in literacy and composition scholarship. This oversight impedes both efforts to improve literacy instruction within these programs and to potentially transfer their effective practices to more traditional institutional settings. Since literacy is at the heart of the Puente Project, most of the existing research is focused on this site. In a descriptive

study on Puente's literacy curriculum, Cazden (2002) found that the project gave participants opportunities to develop hybrid identities and bicultural competencies by blending instrumental culture, skills necessary for social advancement, with students' expressive culture, their own values and interpersonal connections. The literacy curriculum accomplished this goal in two ways: (1). thematic units that paired canonical works with multicultural literature and (2). writing assignments in a wide range of genres, including literary analysis, issue/commentary, poetry, and community ethnographies. Alongside this rigorous and culturally relevant curriculum, teachers helped students access academic literacy through heavily scaffolded assignments and collaborative approaches to learning. Through both the instructional methods and its curriculum, Puente was able to form a bridge between home and school.

While acknowledging the importance of instructional methods and curriculum, Pradl (2002) argues that the Puente project's documented success reflects its ability to link these curricular interventions with teacher training. Unlike most educational reforms that prescribe curriculum for teachers to follow and offer little guidance, Puente supports teachers through ongoing professional development and collaboration, giving them tools to respond to the needs and interests of their students instead of lockstep procedures. For instance, the teachers in the study reported greater confidence in teaching writing due to the program's emphasis on writing alongside their students. Ongoing professional development also helped teachers consistently assess writing portfolios, use ethnographic research to identify students' strengths and needs, and design collaborative learning activities. Based on the success of this model of professional development, Pradhil suggests it may be beneficial in training English teachers outside the program, noting that such efforts were already underway in some California schools.

College composition teachers and writing program administrators have also started to explore the insights pre-college outreach programs can offer for designing transitional writing courses. Moore, Pyne, & Patch (2013), for instance, profiled a collaboration between a pre-college outreach and first-year writing program to develop a special section of freshman composition for underrepresented students. The pre-college outreach program was modeled after TRIO and invited low-income and potential first-generation high school students to the campus of a local university during the summer for academic enrichment. Like TRIO, the program also offered mentorship and tutoring during the school year and additional support services once students entered college. The freshman writing class was designed to provide a culminating experience for program participants and to pilot effective first-year writing courses for the university's special populations. The curriculum required students to write personal, analytical, and persuasive essay about their educational trajectories while also emphasizing the research and writing process. A special workshop modeled after campus writing centers also provided students with additional opportunities to use campus resources and consult with the teacher and undergraduate tutors trained in composition pedagogy. Assessment data from this study suggests that students became more familiar with the writing process but did not meet other outcomes, such as increased rhetorical awareness. Based on these findings, Moor, Pyne, and Patch concluded that similar courses would benefit from clearer expectations for tutors and students regarding the writing workshop and a longer duration.

In a similar study, McCurrie (2009) examined the restructuring of one summer bridge program's developmental writing course in order to present strategies WPAs could use to balance the interests of multiple stakeholders. Comparing administrators', writing teachers', and students' definitions of a successful experience, he found that responses varied across groups. Administrators tended to see these programs as a quick fix to improve retention

efforts, measuring success by a cost-benefit analysis based on attrition rates, credits earned, grades, and program expense. Teachers, on the other hand, focused on personally relevant instruction, building community, providing positive experiences in college, and preparing students to succeed in future coursework. The students' goals were less academically oriented, mainly focused on curriculum that was personally meaningful. Showing how the curriculum and program goals evolved to incorporate these varied perspectives, McCurrie suggests that in order to truly provide open access, basic writing programs need to focus on more than retention or preparation for future coursework; they need to enrich students' lives outside the classroom. Like Cazden and Pahl, McCurrie has highlighted the many effective strategies that pre-college outreach programs have developed to build off of students' backgrounds to learn academic writing.

These brief snapshots suggest that this type of research can benefit both English education and college composition by offering models of professional development, curriculum design, and instructional methods that have promoted college access for underserved populations. However, due to their sheer variety, little is known about how these very different program contexts support literacy development. The site, timeframe, missions, and target population of each program offer a unique set of constraints and possibilities for learning academic writing. As such, it is difficult to determine which program structures are most beneficial for improving access to academic writing. Additionally, due to a lack of cross-contextual research, the transferability of curriculum, instructional strategies or student learning remains questionable. These studies also do not account for native-language background. Yet, as Kanno & Harklau (2012) have shown, linguistic minority students often come from low-income homes in which neither parent has a college education. Since these are the two main criteria for most pre-college outreach programs, the lack of attention towards linguistic diversity is a considerable oversight.

Finally, these studies do not focus on students' perspectives; rather they emphasize the curriculum, instructional strategies, program design, and professional development. While beneficial, such research does not capture whether or not these programs help non-dominant students negotiate the identity conflicts that have been associated with entering college and learning academic literacy.

Filling in the Gaps: Students' Cross-Contextual Experiences with Writing

Several decades of research have documented the many ways in which academic literacy blocks underrepresented students' access to higher education by ignoring or suppressing the resources they bring to writing. Still, little is known about how to help these students' access the types of academic writing they need to enroll in college and complete a degree. This challenge is compounded by vague and often conflicting perspectives among stakeholders, hierarchical power structures, and identity conflicts. Existing research on literacy instruction in pre-college outreach programs suggests that these sites can offer promising strategies for addressing these challenges. However, it is still unclear how different program contexts influence students' experiences with academic writing, especially when they enter new institutional settings, such as a high school English or college composition classroom. Moreover, little is known about how linguistic diversity affects program outcomes.

To begin to address these gaps, I have designed a series of case studies that focus on five culturally and linguistically diverse students' experiences with academic writing within and beyond the largest pre-college outreach program, Upward Bound. In addition to its longevity and popularity, the context of UB provides a unique liminal space that can offer new insights into the intersections between academic discourse, identity, and educational trajectories. Taking part in the Upward Bound summer program gives students an opportunity to experience college preparatory coursework within a university setting and step outside of

the institutional identities they have developed within their high schools. How this unique context impacts these first-generation college students' experiences with academic writing within and beyond the program provides the focus for this study. Specifically, these case studies address the following research question and subquestions:

- How does participation in UB influence students' identifications with and access to academic writing during their senior year of high school, and what impact does this have on their educational trajectories.
 - How and to what extent does participation in the program interrupt students' trajectories and transform their identities as writers?
 - What factors influence these possibilities for disruption/transformation?

The next five chapters of the dissertation will address these questions by laying out my method of inquiry, findings, and implications.

In chapter 2, "A Socially Situated Framework for Literacy and Identity," I establish the theoretical framework for the study. This paradigm is designed to address the issues of power, access, and identity that have been introduced within this first chapter. Using this paradigm, I define key terms and concepts used within the study, including literacy, discourse, identity, and agency. I also argue that multiple theoretical orientations are necessary in order to fully examine how micro and macro-level influences affect literacy, identity, and agency.

In chapter 3, "Methodology and Research Design," I explain the rationale behind my qualitative inquiry methods, including its case study design and the selection of participants. I provide an in-depth discussion of my data collection activities and the settings in which they occurred. Next, I highlight my procedures for data analysis to explain how I was able to contextualize textual artifacts and the processes of production and interpretation surrounding them. Finally, I highlight the steps I took to increase the trustworthiness of the study, while

also acknowledging how my own positionality and subjectivities influenced my interpretations.

In chapter 4, “The Participants as Individuals,” I introduce the five case study participants: Jared, Marie, Savannah, Ariel, and Gabrielle. Offering rich portraits of these participants’ personalities, unique circumstances, literacy histories, and postsecondary aspirations, I highlight their individuality while also laying the groundwork for the thematically-structured chapters that follow.

In chapter 5 “Literacy Sponsorship High School and UB: The Impact of (De)Segregation, Investment, and Authenticity,” I use a thematic structure to present findings across cases to support my argument that institutional factors enabled and constrained participants’ academic writing. Drawing from both a Communities of Practice perspective and theories of literacy sponsorship, I support this premise by illustrating how tracking and large class sizes within participants’ high schools disrupted the investment and social supports for writing students gained in the Upward Bound summer program.

In chapter 6, “Resistance and Compliance: Self Presentation in Scholarship and Admissions Essays,” I concentrate on two exemplar cases to provide a detailed examination of the cultural conflicts surrounding academic writing and college access. Complicating difference-as-resource theories, I argue that the unique rhetorical contexts surrounding college admissions and scholarship essays exclude or exoticize students’ cultural and linguistic background. Specifically, I claim that writing to a dispersed audience with power over material resources pressures students to construct discursive identities that stand out from the applicant pool while also blending in with institutional values. Like tracking and material constraints, these performed identities also disrupted the connections with academic writing participants formed within UB.

Finally, in chapter 7, “New Avenues for Access and Success: An Integrated System for Supporting First-Generation College Students,” I conclude this inquiry by highlighting the significance of this study and its implications for pre-college outreach programs, literacy reforms, English Education, First-Year Composition, and multilingual scholars. I argue that both the benefits and limitations of pre-college outreach programs lie in their liminality. I then explore how understanding these strengths and limitations can help both high school English teachers and FYC instructors and administrators design more effective instruction. First, I call for more research into precollege outreach programs to better understand these strengths and limitations. Noting the benefits of adequate staffing, I call for literacy reforms to acknowledge the significance of educational resources. However, in the meantime, I point to instructional techniques and programmatic changes that teachers and administrators can also use to support these students’ literacy development and college access.

Chapter II

A Socially-Situated Framework for Literacy and Identity

Language learning engages the identities of learners because language itself is not only a linguistic system of signs and symbols; it is also a complex social practice in which the value and meaning ascribed to an utterance are determined in part by the value and meaning ascribed to the person who speaks. (Norton & Toohey, 2002, p. 115)

As Norton & Toohey attest, language is not a set of neutral skills that can be separated from issues of power, identity, and agency. Rather, a dynamic interplay of social practices surrounds literacy and language learning. The scholarship on first-generation college students presented in the previous chapter has highlighted how these issues of power and identity affect their interactions with academic literacy and transitions to college. Given the saliency of these trends, I have turned to the growing body of literacy-identity scholarship to construct a lens for analyzing this dynamic interplay. This chapter clarifies how I am using key terms and briefly introduces other important theoretical concepts that will be revisited during the analysis of findings within subsequent chapters.

In many ways, this growing interest in issues of identity, power, and agency reflects a radical shift in how literacy has traditionally been conceptualized. Several theorists have noted how definitions of literacy have proliferated throughout history (Christenbury, Bomer, & Smagorinsky, 2009; Heath, 1999; Rose, 1989). At one time, literacy was conceived as the ability to sign one's name. However, definitions have expanded to encompass competencies of any kind, as reflected in terms such as "computer literacy" or "workplace literacy." Given the slippery nature of this term, Christenbury, Bomer, & Smagorinsky (2009) have urged

researchers to clarify their definitions. This study primarily focuses on writing, but resists characterizing these practices as a discrete, transferable set of skills, what Street (1984) has termed the “autonomous” perspective on literacy. Instead, taking a cue from Gee (1990), I maintain that literacy is not limited to words but comprises the attributes and attitudes individuals bring to social situations. In this sense literacy is ideological and deeply rooted in identity because it represents a stance in relation to the world.

Situating the Study in Literacy-Identity Scholarship

Based upon this perspective, the current study draws upon multiple theoretical frameworks to establish the following core tenants:

1. Literacy learning and identities are interconnected and socially situated.
2. While literacies and identities are dynamic, social structures can both enable and constrict fluidity and agency.
3. Social influences on literacies and identities emanate from both broader cultural and institutional discourses and more immediate situational encounters.

As Moje, Luke, Davies, and Street (2009) have observed, an increasing number of literacy studies have embraced similar tenants in an effort to balance social constraints with individual agency. Despite these trends, they note that these concepts have been articulated in different ways within the larger body of literacy and identity research. For instance, in considering social influences, some theories primarily root identity in sustained group membership. Others tie it in moment-to-moment interactions or enactments. Pointing to this multiplicity of perspectives, Moje et al. (2009) argue that “the key to rigorous literacy and identity studies seems to lie in the recognition of what particular theories can do for our understanding of how literacy and identity work to develop one another and of our awareness of the limitations of a given metaphor and its methods of analysis and representation” (p.

432). This section accomplishes this objective by articulating what understandings particular theories contribute to this study. However, as I will argue throughout the remainder of this chapter, each of these individual theories offers a limited perspective on the intersections between micro and macro-level influences, agency, identities, and literacies. To address these limitations, I have strategically combined multiple perspectives within this study of how pre-college outreach programs impact first-generation college students' identifications with the academic literacies they need to enter college.

Multiple efforts have been made to clarify distinctions within this varied body of literacy and identity scholarship. By drawing on these taxonomies throughout this chapter, I hope to illustrate how the current study is positioned within the broader body of scholarship. Among the earlier work in this vein, Gee (2001/2002) presented conceptualizations of identity that ranged from the static, nature or biology, to most dynamic, group affinity. Institutional and discursively constructed identities fell between these poles of the continuum. Since then Moje et al. (2009) have established a taxonomy built upon five primary metaphors: identity as (1) difference, (2). sense of self, (3) mind or consciousness, (4). narrative, and (5) position. Similarly, Lewis & De Valle (2009) have grouped these studies into three different waves: identity as (1). cultural conflict, (2). negotiated and performative, (3). hybrid, metadiscursive, and spatial. There are considerable overlaps within and between these taxonomies. Working across them, I describe in detail the categories that shaped this study and how they help me to frame identities as enactments of self in particular positions, typically defined or generated by cultural, racial, classed or gendered differences.

Identity-as-Difference, Position, and Cultural Conflict

The identity-as-difference, position, and cultural conflict categories each emphasize the importance of sustained group memberships socially assigned through nationality, race, gender, or social class. Individuals use these socially-constructed categories to identify

differences and similarities between themselves and others. The identity-as-position metaphor also helps to illustrate how these identities become social labels that individuals can either resist or embrace. However, recent studies have shifted from a difference-as cultural-conflict perspective towards a difference-as-resource model to consider how new technologies and trends in globalization have increased diverse learners' agency and fluidity. In addition to considering these assigned memberships, the identity-as-difference metaphor also considers group affiliation based on choice or affinity. These chosen affiliations have, in turn, opened new possibilities for cross-cultural contact and hybrid identities. Here, I address each type of group membership and how it affects identity formation and literacy development.

Reflected within several landmark studies, the identity-as-cultural conflict perspective has played an important role in drawing educators' attention to intersections between group membership, literacy, and identity. Building on sociolinguistic work of the 1970s, these studies emphasized the conflicts between non-dominant groups and the culture of school. For instance, Heath's (1983) ethnography of working and middle class families in the South Carolina Piedmont region revealed that schools tended to privilege the literacies of the dominant social class. A large part of her research aimed to make these working class and racial minority students' "ways with words" a part of the school curriculum. In theorizing these differences, Gee (1989) has likewise compared the discourses used by dominant and non-dominant groups. Noting that discourse is far more than just stretches of language, Gee (1989) has referred to it as a sort of "identity kit" or distinct group of "saying (writing)-doing-being-valuing-believing combinations" (p. 142). Since differences in discourses identify membership in a particular social group, he has noted that institutions often use them as a means of exclusion. Furthermore, it can be difficult for members of non-dominant groups to directly learn dominant discourses. For this reason, he has argued that individuals have a limited amount of agency over their institutional or discursive identities. Largely in protest to

Gee's argument, Delpit (1995) noted similar trend across racial lines, with schools often excluding minority students' preferred discourses. However, she has also asserted that, while schools need to make more room for these primary discourses, students can and should be explicitly taught "codes of power" that provide access to social and material goods.

This early scholarship strategically presented identity as a relatively stable set of characteristics in order to move away from deficit perspectives and highlight educational inequities. However, such perspectives have also been criticized for essentializing identities and limiting agency (Lewis & Del Valle, 2009). Contemporary literacy research within the identity-as-difference category has tried to address these limitations by shifting towards a difference-as-resource model. This model has highlighted how diverse students "do—and can—use their background as a stepping stone to master academic discourses" and that "their values can function as a source of strength in their writing experience in English" (p. Canagarajah, 2002, p. 225). Embracing this perspective, Villalva (2006), has described how multilingual high school students effectively drew on home and community discourses to guide their approaches to inquiry during a senior exhibition project. She observed that these resources often remain "hidden" due to teachers' and researchers' focus on the product instead of the process. Likewise, Valdès (2003) has argued that many young bilingual interpreters may fit current definitions for giftedness based on their ability to simultaneously analyze, synthesize, and revise meaning at the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels of communication. Finally, Campano (2007) has shown how Filipino fifth graders used family and personal narratives to build transcultural identities, maintain an ethic of care, and overcome the trauma of displacement and oppressive social conditions.

While earlier identity-as-cultural-conflict studies also validated diverse students' resources, they often compartmentalized their discourses. Delpit (1995), for instance, believed diverse students should "codeswitch" between primary and institutional discourses.

Critiquing this approach, Canagarajah (2002) has noted that it “imposes a split subjectivity on multilingual students—they are asked to be different persons in different communities/contexts” (p. 225). Instead, he has argued that students should blend discourses to reflect their own values within academic writing and infuse dominant conventions with oppositional meanings. Such practices could increase agency over writing practices through hybrid identities and critical awareness. While acknowledging that dominant discourses can reflect oppressive ideologies, Canagarajah has maintained that language users can resist and even transform them.

Canagarajah’s (2012) recent theories of translanguaging have been an outgrowth of this difference-as-resource model. While translanguaging is an evolving theory developed by multiple scholars, it typically emphasizes fluidity and critical awareness by challenging monolingualism and static views on language. Undermining the notion of stable and bounded communities, languages, and identities, Canagarajah has argued that new technologies have increased cross-cultural contact by compressing time and space. As such, individuals inhabit multiple positions, and these subjectivities become layered or laminated, with varying levels of conflict or cohesion. Based on increased globalization, language users who have developed multiple resources for representing meanings and identities possess a distinct advantage. This ability, which he terms performative competence, emerges through sustained cross-cultural contact, as interlocutors align their linguistic resources and readjust their communication strategies. Such competencies can help translanguagers negotiate different values and semiotic resources to collaborate on shared goals.

Similar to translanguaging, theories of translingualism have challenged monolingual orientations to argue that bilingual instruction should not try to compartmentalize languages. Traditionally, bilingual pedagogies have taken a subtractive approach in which the target language gradually replaces the heritage language. While recent additive approaches to

bilingual education have tried to maintain the heritage language, they have still separated it from target language instruction. Distinguishing translanguaging from these other approaches, García & Kano (2014) have described it as “a process by which students and teachers engage in complex discursive practices that include *all* the language practices of students in order to develop new language practices, sustain old ones, communicate appropriate knowledge, and give voice to new sociopolitical realities by interrogating linguistic inequality” (p. 261). Unlike translanguaging, whose pedagogical applications remain unclear (Matsuda, 2014), translanguaging theories have established clear strategies for classroom practice. García & Kano (2014), for instance, used this approach to design a workshop for bilingual Japanese students on the writing section of the SAT. After conducting a thematic analysis of past prompts, they used English readings with Japanese translations to introduce students to culturally unfamiliar topics. Students discussed these essays in Japanese and wrote essay responses in English. While proficiency levels affected students’ use of linguistic resources, all developed a greater meta-knowledge of their language usage. Blending languages, then, can offer teachers and students a valuable strategy for addressing the issues of power, identity, and agency that have affected diverse students’ access to academic literacies.

As with translanguaging and translanguaging, the New London Group (NLG) (1996) has coined the term multiliteracies to highlight the growing saliency of linguistic diversity due to new technological developments and globalization. However, they have also explored the role multiple modalities play in this process of making and communicating meaning. Reflecting the difference-as-resource perspective, they have argued that “to be relevant, learning processes need to recruit, rather than attempt to ignore and erase, the different *subjectivities*—interests, intentions, commitment, and purposes—students bring to learning” (NLG, 1996, p. 72). They have argued that a pedagogy of multiliteracies can promote

educational access by validating students' preferred linguistic and semiotic resources. By increasing students' critical awareness and access to learning, this pedagogy can enact social transformation.

However while Canagarajah has tied this transformation to translingual practice, the NLG has used the concept of Design to analyze this process. In articulating the design process, the NLG has explained that “we are both inheritors of patterns and conventions of meaning and at the same time active designers of meaning, and as active designers of meaning, we are at the same time active designers of futures [. . .]” (p.65). A semiotic system, then, can be viewed as both reproductive and transformative since redesigned meanings ultimately offer new available designs which other meaning makers will draw upon and transform in their own design process. Such changes in meaning making and representation can enact ideological shifts that transform power relations.

Empirical research has illustrated how students from diverse linguistic, cultural, and class backgrounds have enacted this process of transformation through design. Jordan (2009, 2012) found that L2 writers have competencies in navigating a wide range of symbolic resources that both they and their peers draw upon in academic writing, such as lexical adaptations, strategies for rhetorical accommodation and resistance, cross-cultural information and critique, metadiscursive awareness, and group dynamic sensitivity. In other words, these diverse students didn't just internalize academic discourse, they transformed it by infusing their own symbolic resources. In a similar vein, drawing on Bahktin's theories of heteroglossia, Ashley (2001) explored how four working-class college students incorporated centrifugal forces into academic discourses. In contrast to the centripetal forces that maintain discourse stability, centrifugal forces add diversity, discord, and dissensus. Specifically, she found that these students, whom she identified as proficient writers, used gaming (giving teachers what they wanted while also manipulating these expectations for a higher grade) and

reverse plagiarism (passing their own ideas off as another's) as a rhetorical strategy to re-integrate their identities and change their instructors' conceptions of acceptable texts. Although teachers did not notice this "double-voicedness," it was still very important in giving students a sense of control over academic discourse.

Since discourses change to accommodate new symbolic resources, the power relations they entail can likewise be transformed to more fully include non-dominant students and the identities they bring to their high school and college classrooms. Unfortunately, schools are conservative institutions that often decelerate this potential for transformation, and these centripetal forces are always in tension with the centrifugal ones. While highlighting the symbolic resources diverse students bring to academic discourse, these studies also document their continued invisibility or illegitimacy to teachers. While the difference-as-resource model has overlapped with third-wave literacy and identity research, which emphasizes hybrid identities, this continued sense of marginality highlights potential conflicts between these multiple subjectivities, a tension which I will explore in detail within chapter 6. Despite growing efforts to acknowledge fluid and hybrid identities, this model offers a limited view of agency.

However, to only consider theories that focus on cultural identities would offer a distorted view of agency. Growing opportunities to participate in groups based on common practices or affinities instead of essentialized features have increased fluidity and agency (Canagarajah, 2012; Gee 2000/2001). To better account for these emerging shifts in group membership, I have found it necessary to draw on the Community of Practice (CoP) perspective. CoPs have been defined as "groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise" (Wenger & Snyder, 2000, p.139). This concept originally appeared as part of Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning, which challenged the dualisms between individuals' cognitive processes and the activities of

a community. They argued that, rather than internalizing knowledge, individuals enact learning as persons-in-the-world, engaging in the shared practices of a community. In case studies ranging from Yucatec midwives to Alcoholics Anonymous, this theory has illustrated how learning within CoPs occurs through Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP). As part of this process, newcomers gradually master requisite knowledge and skills for community practices through an attenuated form of participation. However, rather than simply inheriting meanings, newcomers transform the community through their participation. Since membership and forms of practice are always changing, CoPs are dynamic rather than stable.

According to Lave & Wenger (1991) this learning process plays a critical role in identity formation, which they have defined as “long-term living relations between persons and their place and participation in communities of practice” (p. 53). Because CoPs entail both ongoing participation and reified meanings, the identities formed through such engagement are equally dualistic. Lave & Wenger have explained that LPP entails more than new knowledge or skills; rather, such practices develop identities of mastery within the community. This perspective has been criticized for focusing mainly on identities of mastery within singular CoPs, neglecting diverse learning trajectories (Haneda, 2006). Other than the case study of meat cutters, whose learning was constricted by exploitative apprenticeships, Lave & Wenger have rarely considered the issues of power and marginalization surrounding community practices and identity formation.

Addressing these concerns in a later monograph, Wenger (1998) has highlighted multiple trajectories of learning within CoPs that can lead to identities of mastery, marginalization, or even non-participation. He also has explored connections between communities and individuals’ efforts to reconcile identities across a “nexus of multimemberships” with potentially competing forms of participation. He has noted that with these multiple opportunities for membership, individuals shape their identity by associating

and disassociating themselves from different communities. Still, while Wegner has acknowledged the influence of power dynamics, he does not actually illustrate these issues within his analysis of a claims processing department. In some ways, then, issues of power, difference, and conflict continue to be minimized within the CoP framework.

Scholars influenced by the CoP perspective have noted its value for developing a dynamic view of communities, knowledge, and identities. However, many have also reconceptualized this theory to better account for power conflicts and competing interests. Noting the influence of CoPs on translingualism, Canagarajah (2012) writes, “The Communities of Practice model helps us theorize how flexible and fluid communities can be formed with open and changing memberships for translocal collaboration and communication” (p. 30). In other words, by analyzing communities based on shared practices rather than essentialized features, such as race, ethnicity, or language, this theory illustrates how people from different backgrounds can negotiate meanings to accomplish a joint enterprise. It also shows how participants can transfer practices across different communities. In the process, they negotiate diverse meanings that can become reified into new linguistic forms. However, challenging the CoP perspective, Canagarajah also indicates that shared practices or values are not required for communities to work. Drawing on Pratt’s (1991) concept of “contact zones,” “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other,” (p.34) Canagajah illustrates how individuals can use translingual practice to maintain their differences while also achieving shared objectives.

Similarly, in their pedagogy of multiliteracies, the NLG (1996) has acknowledged the importance of situated practice in literacy learning. Like Lave & Wegner (1991) they have argued that the human mind is not built to process general rules and abstractions. Rather, language and literacy are highly contextualized within social domains and practices. However, they have also indicated that situated practice alone is not enough because

“learners immersed in rich and complex practices can vary quite significantly from each other (and from curricular goals), and some can spend a good deal of time pursuing the wrong leads, so to speak” (p. 84). For this reason, they pair situated practice with overt instruction to ensure that diverse learners get equal access to the shared practices they need to advance socially and academically.

Finally, Gee (2009) has noted that while the CoP perspective has been fruitful, the term community is problematic because it can connote a false sense of belonging and collective purpose. Additionally, varying forms and levels of membership make it hard to determine boundaries. To address these limitations, he poses an alternate site of analysis, spaces. Gee has argued that the concept of a “space” is preferable to that of a community because, by not attempting to label a group of people, it clarifies boundaries and permits an analysis of multiple forms of interaction. In outlining the two essential elements of any space, Gee has used the term “Generator” to describe how content is created within a space. The second element, “portals,” is the ways in which individuals access a space. Sometimes generators become portals if they give individuals access to the content. Likewise, portals can serve as generators when they are used to transform the content, organization, or interactions within a space.

In one type of space—affinity spaces—individuals share a common cause or interest and the practices that support it. Gee has established eleven criteria that can identify affinity spaces based on the relationships between members, the types of knowledge used and valued, and the interactions between generators and portals. Namely, affinity spaces encourage less hierarchical relationships, acknowledge a wider range of knowledge and forms of engagement, and permit users to transform the content. Like CoPs, they allow individuals to form sustained group memberships that are not based on essentialized features. However, they present greater fluidity and agency by providing multiple forms of access and

engagement. Despite these benefits, as I discuss in greater detail within chapter 5, UB presented more features of a CoP than an affinity space. Wegner (1998) has established three main criteria for CoPs: mutual engagement, joint activity, and shared repertoires.

Participants in UB engaged with one another in activities surrounding college preparation, developing shared practices in the process. However, UB lacked distributed knowledge, varied leadership, and the variety of media specific portals that characterize affinity spaces (Gee, 2009; Curwood, Magnifico, & Lammers, 2013). For this reason, this study draws on CoPs rather than the affinity space framework.

Theories that base identity on group differences face ongoing tensions surrounding fluidity and reification. Emerging technologies, multiplying forms of group membership, and increasing cross-cultural contact have allowed individuals to develop hybrid identities that reflect multiple affiliations. At the same time, institutional constraints and cultural differences can limit this fluidity and create conflicts within an individual's multilayered identities. For this reason, the current study balances theories that emphasize agency and transformation with those that highlight issues of power, reproduction, and cultural conflict. While it is important to consider how these issues play out within sustained group memberships, these are not the only social interactions that shape identity. Moreover, individuals, such as the participants in this study, don't merely define themselves in terms of these group memberships. Rather, a sense of self also emerges from performances enacted during moment-to-moment interactions. To reflect these everyday influences and increasingly dynamic identity negotiations, I have found it useful to draw on Erving Goffman's performance theories within this project.

Developing a Sense of Self through Socially Negotiated Performances

As Moje et al. note, the identity-as-difference and identity-as-self metaphors are closely related. However, whereas the first emphasizes how selves are different, the latter

focuses on how they are produced or constituted in social interaction. Beginning in the 1990s, a growing number of literacy researchers posited that identities were generated through ongoing social enactments or performances (Lewis & Del Valle, 2009). While studies in these categories have drawn upon multiple frameworks to analyze this process, here I focus on work emanating from Goffman's (1959, 1981) theories of social interaction because they highlight how individuals decide to enact or reject socially ratified ways of being in everyday encounters. As chapter 6 will illustrate, such a perspective has enriched the identity-as-difference model in considering why participants in this study have enacted and rejected certain group memberships from one moment to the next. These theories account for how they creatively constructed performances out of multiple and often competing roles.

Goffman's (1959) theories of self-presentation emerged from his interest in how individuals communicated meaning through different forms of social action, especially those that moved beyond language, such as nonverbal cues, physical appearance, props, timing, and room arrangements. Based on an analysis of social interactions, he claimed that individuals consciously and unconsciously conveyed information that others could use to define the situation or establish shared expectations for social interactions. According to Goffman, the definition of the situation could be manipulated both through the signals expressly given and those indirectly given off, a concept he referred to as impression management. Throughout the book based on this work, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, he used extended dramaturgical metaphors to present identity as an abstract set of conventions rather than an intrinsic personal characteristic. Specifically, he distinguished the performer producing these impressions from the usually idealized character being projected. He also contrasted public performances with private backstage moments, which individuals see as part of their true selves. However, challenging this notion of an autonomous self, Goffman argued that identity could not be separated from social enactments.

While the dynamic nature of these moment-to-moment interactions generate fluid identities, Goffman also noted how performances could sediment into frequently used roles or parts. In other words, individuals' repertoires and future performances are dictated by the previous roles they have developed. When the definition of the situation is well defined and individuals have access to the "right" bits and pieces, their competence is enhanced by pulling of a successful performance. However, in situations that are foreign or poorly defined, performances can come to an embarrassed halt, with reputations being tarnished and self-competence diminishing. For this reason, any particular performance often has long lasting effects.

Goffman (1981) would later build on these concepts within *Forms of Talk*, an examination of issues self-hood in language production. Focusing specifically on forms of speech, Goffman explored how individuals used language to socially align themselves in a process he referred to as footing. While he applied his performative theories to language, Goffman never explicitly addressed social interactions surrounding writing. However composition scholars have drawn upon his work. Newkirk (1997) and Ivanic (1998), for instance, have applied concepts from his earlier work to students' identity constructions within their writing. Finally, both Prior (1998) and Canagarajah (2012) have drawn upon the concept of footings to analyze graduate students' and multilingual writers' social alignments and laminated roles.

While these theories have been useful for addressing issues of identity in academic writing, they also pose some limitations. Both Prior (1998) and Ivanic (1998), for instance, have noted that Goffman does not adequately consider how audience and access to prototypical performances impact agency. By pairing performance theories with perspectives that tie identity to group membership, I have been able to highlight how broader social forces can potentially constrain agency. However, group memberships are not the only macro-level

factors that affect agency. Economic forces and institutional practices also shape identity construction and literacy development. As I will discuss in chapter 6, these factors impacted the study participants' identifications with academic literacies, and Brandt's (2001) concept of literacy sponsorship has been useful addition to the CoP framework for analyzing these trends.

Literacy Sponsorship and the Spatial Dimensions of Identity

Lewis and Del Valle (2009) have placed Brandt's theory of literacy sponsorship within the identity-as-spatial wave of scholarship because it shows how literacy practices are "networked within local and global flows of activity" (p. 317). As Brandt & Clinton (2002) have argued, socially situated theories of identity and literacy reflect imbalances between local and distant influences that distort the relationship between agency and hegemony. The concept of literacy sponsorship can help to overcome these impasses.

According to Brandt & Clinton (2002) these theoretical blind spots have arisen from overcorrections to the autonomous model, which treated literacy as a decontextualized technology that transformed human culture and cognition. In this autonomous model, agency resided almost entirely with these distant technologies. Rejecting these claims, socially situated perspectives have argued that social action within local contexts shaped the way literacy was used. This stance has primarily placed agency with people. However, Brandt & Clinton have pointed to several gaps in these socially situated theories. Specifically, they have argued that revisionists ignore the transcontextualizing role texts play in connecting people and action across time and space. Additionally, emphasizing human agency in local practice has failed to capture the many instances in which people do not control how they use literacy. To address these gaps, Brandt and Clinton have highlighted the need for a "perspective that can begin to expose the ways that 'local literacies' are recruited into distant campaigns through reading and writing" (p. 1330).

They have suggested that the theory of literacy sponsorship can fulfill this need. This concept emerged from Brandt's (2001) earlier study, which gathered the life histories of 80 people born between 1895 and 1985 to trace changes in how individuals experienced literacy learning. In many ways, her research drew on social perspectives, as she situated literacy learning within biographical, comparative, economic, and historical contexts. However, as the economic context became increasingly salient, literacy emerged as a resource rather than just a practice. This characterization permitted a closer examination of how political and commercial interests conscripted literacy and why it was often distributed unevenly. Capturing these phenomena, Brandt coined the term "literacy sponsor" to identify "those agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable or induce literacy and gain advantage by it in some way" (p. 1332) As an analytical concept, literacy sponsorship can help researchers trace how literacy practices and materials within a local context connect to distant interests and the ideologies they bear. Such an analysis presents a multisourced version of agency by acknowledging that "when we use literacy, we also get used" (p. 1333).

Conclusion

Taken together, these theories offer a framework for understanding how literacy and identity intersect with culturally determined groups, chosen affiliations, everyday interactions, and economic and institutional forces. Balancing agency between the local and distant, individual and social, they show how identity construction within and through literacy is neither wholly a matter of personal choice nor hegemonic constraints. Combining these perspectives also reconciles seemingly paradoxical positions, showing how identity can be simultaneously stable and dynamic. While present throughout schooled writing, these tensions come to the foreground in the discourses required for college access and success. As chapter 1 illustrated, gatekeeping forms of writing have traditionally privileged the discourses of white, middle-to- upper-class students. Compounding this problem, large-scale literacy

assessments have often been used to create institutional labels that marginalize first-generation college students and further constrict their access to academic discourse. Using the theoretical concepts and constructs presented in this chapter, the findings presented throughout the remainder of this work will both corroborate and complicate these trends by showing how pre-college outreach programs can temporarily suspend if not completely eradicate these barriers. However, in order to contextualize these findings, chapters 3 and 4 will first provide a detailed account of the study, its location, and the participants.

Chapter III

Methodology and Research Design

For the purposes of this study, a naturalistic perspective was selected in which qualitative methodologies and sources were employed. Multiple case studies were intentionally used to respond to the following research questions about potential first-generation college students in the Upward Bound Program:

Main Question:

- How does participation in Upward Bound influence potential first-generation students' identifications with and access to academic literacies during their senior year of high school, and what impact does this influence have on students' academic trajectories?

Subquestions:

- How and to what extent does participation in the program interrupt students' trajectories and transform their identities as writers?
- What factors influence these possibilities for disruption or transformation?

In this chapter, the naturalistic process (sampling procedures, data collection, coding and analysis, trustworthiness, and limitations) is explained.

Research Design

The naturalistic inquiry model, also referred to as postpositivistic or qualitative inquiry, was selected for this investigation. Qualitative research allows for the interpretation

of “people’s constructions of reality and identif[ies] uniqueness and patterns in their perspectives and behaviors” (Glesne, 2011, p. 19). In using this mode of inquiry, this study was based on the premise that reality is constructed, not represented. In keeping with this constructivist epistemology, a case study design was chosen because it was appropriate for examining naturally occurring, contemporary phenomena that could not be separated from its context (Stake, 1994; Yin, 2009). This method was also suitable because it allowed for an emergent, flexible research design that allowed readjustments to the study’s focus based on what was learned from participants (Brice, 2005).

Rather than designing a collection of case studies on precollege outreach programs, the focus was on students’ perceptions and experiences as they prepared for and applied to college. This decision was motivated by the fact that most discussions of college readiness rarely include the perspectives of the primary stakeholders—students. Even fewer, examine the experiences of underrepresented populations, and that gap was critical to address.

Context and Sampling

In this section I offer a detailed description of the Upward Bound program and the urban school districts where this study occurred. I explain the procedures and rationale behind participant selection, including sample size and type. In securing entry to these study sites and recruiting participants, I adhered to ethical guidelines for qualitative research. I obtained permission from the administration to conduct research in all study sites. To maintain confidentiality, all locations and participants have been identified with pseudonyms.

The Upward Bound Program

My study began at a UB summer program with 114 students held on the campus of a medium-sized public university in the Northeastern United States. The university was situated within Stony Brooke, a rural town of 10,342 permanent residents and 12,811 students, with a mean family income of \$128,949, the third highest in the state (US Census

American Community Survey, 2012). In contrast to the relative affluence of Stony Brooke, the four communities this UB program served contained almost 20% of all low-income young people in the state (UB Program Profile).

In order to be eligible for the Upward Bound program, participants completed a three-stage application process that demonstrated their educational and financial need, academic aptitude, and commitment to obtaining a postsecondary education. Any low-income or first generation student in six target high schools was eligible to apply if s/he were a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. Students could apply during their freshman, sophomore, or junior year. The application process began in February, when students were invited to attend an informational session after expressing interest in the program or being anonymously referred by a family member, friend, or teacher. At this session, students watched a slideshow of program activities, listened to testimonials from UB participants, and learned about the program requirements and application process.

Application materials had to be completed and submitted the students' guidance counselor at the beginning of March. Applications included a student and parent questionnaire, a release form for academic records, income tax statements, documentation of citizenship/resident status, a personal statement, and evaluations from a math and English/ESOL teacher. The six-page student and one-page parent/guardian questionnaire asked about educational background, nationality, native language, extracurricular activities, interest in UB, and academic goals. On this form, students were asked to commit to taking college preparatory courses, to participating in the program throughout high school, and to enrolling in a postsecondary institution. Their parents were also asked to express that they would support them in these pursuits. The one-page teacher evaluation form advised recommenders to provide information that would help the program find students "who have academic promise and the need for academic and advising services." Specifically, the form

for English/ESOL teachers asked about students’ literacy levels, motivation in the face of obstacles, study skills, and attendance. Finally, for their personal statement, students were asked to complete a three-paragraph essay on the following prompt: “Please tell us about yourself. What are your plans for the future, and what do you see as potential barriers to achieving them? How might Upward Bound help you achieve your future goals?”

Based on these materials, UB administrators invited a select number of students to a thirty-minute personal interview at their schools. After these interviews, which were held in April, students could be accepted into the school-year program, the summer program, or both based on financial and academic eligibility, academic need, readiness for program services, and available space. See Figure 3.1 for a timeline of the admissions process.

Figure 3.1. Timeline of the UB application process



If students got into only the school year program, they were still eligible for academic advising on course selection, college admissions, and the financial aid process. Their UB mentors also provided personal counseling to help them address personal and familial challenges. Additionally, the school year program offered college visits and Saturday tutoring sessions, where students could get help with homework or college/scholarship applications.

Even if they were not initially accepted for both components, at some point, all study participants eventually gained admittance to the summer program. In some ways, the summer program felt more like a camp than school since students had the opportunity to live together

during the weekdays and enjoy recreational activities, such as a talent show, family barbeques, and field trips to the beach. However, the program's main purpose was to give students a strong academic background, preparation for college admissions, familiarity with campus life and resources, and a support network. Within the summer program, students participated in a number of teambuilding and academic enrichment activities. They took classes in core academic subjects—math, science, and English—as well as electives like SAT/ACT prep, art, yoga, foreign language, and song writing. Class sizes were small, 16 students, and were staffed by both a teacher and a tutor. While students received grades for these classes and could place on an honor roll or high honor roll, these grades and courses were not reflected on their high school transcripts.

During the summer when the study occurred, UB programs nationwide had faced several financial setbacks due to the government's budget sequestration, and this particular program had lost \$25,000 (Personal Interview with Director, 5/2/14). These cuts limited the services that the program could offer students. In previous years, for instance, students spent the day touring campuses in a nearby city to expose them to colleges with an urban setting, and buses shuttled them between their home and the program.

However, given the economic situation, administrators decided that cutting transportation costs would be least detrimental to the program goals, so that summer students mainly stayed in Stony Brooke, and their parents were responsible for driving them there at the start of each week. These changes disappointed and frustrated participants and their parents; however, as the director of the program emphasized during the summer orientation, they had fared relatively well as many programs' contracts had not been renewed that year, and 250 other sites in the region had closed. This program's survival was largely due to the advocacy efforts of the administration, who had flown to Washington numerous times throughout the year to meet with congress. These meetings led to important political

alliances, and at the end of the summer, one of the state representatives who had lobbied for the program came to speak to the students and encourage them to meet their college aspirations.

In addition to these political and economic challenges, due to necessary maintenance, the university could not house the students in the modern, air-conditioned dormitory the program had used in previous years. Instead, students were cramped into a smaller, older building with no air conditioning, and as the heat rose to the high 90s at the end of July, students' energy levels visibly dampened. Although they were grateful to be there, participants frequently expressed nostalgia for the way the program had been in previous years. These changes, then, highlight the fluidity of students' experience as this context faced political turbulence.

School Districts

In many ways, the context of the UB program overlapped with the students' schools since these institutions worked together. After the summer program ended, I followed five of the study participants throughout the remainder of the academic year. These participants attended four different schools in two districts—four in Riverview and one in Breckenridge.

Riverview District. Riverview was an urban district, the largest in the state, in which 56% of its 15,536 students did not meet the state mandated writing proficiency levels, 47% qualified for the Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) program, 10% were identified as having Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and 34% were racial minorities (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2010). The district had both the second lowest per pupil spending and the highest dropout rates in the state.

Like the Upward Bound program, over the past few years, Riverview had seen major budget cuts as federal stimulus money dried up and voters approved a cap on property taxes, a primary source of revenue. As a result, the district refused to adjust salaries for cost of

living, contract negotiations failed, and in May of 2012, 161 teachers had been laid off. English class sizes skyrocketed to as high as 38 students, and while the financial situation in the district had gradually improved by the 2013-14 academic year, the schools were still understaffed, causing the more affluent suburbs to split off from Riverview and further deplete the tax base. Compounding this volatility, the district's leadership was unstable. From 2012-2014, the district superintendent and two principals either retired or were suspended amid rumors of scandal.

The economic strains were visible in the school I was able to visit. Technology was inadequate, and students had limited access to computers and books. Desks were crammed into tight rows—in past years some students had been forced to sit on filing cabinets—and teachers had to share classrooms. Instead of smart boards or computer projectors, an old tube television and chalkboard were mounted on the classroom walls. Yet, as with the staffing, the material conditions were slowly improving. In a visit before the holiday break, one of the students' teachers joked that Christmas had come early for them that year as they had gotten a Xerox machine that actually worked and the school had decided to invest in a classroom set of laptops for students.

Breckingridge District. This district was located in the fourth largest city in the state, and housed one high school. While less racially and linguistically diverse (91% White; 1% LEP), it also had a high level of students qualifying for the FRL program (41%) and low levels of students (35%) meeting state proficiency requirements for writing (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2010). Although the town was definitely working class and far from affluent, the district had more money to spend per pupil and had not experienced the same degree of turbulence as Riverview.

These economic differences were visible when I visited the high school, which presented a majestic façade with large pillars and a clock tower. Behind this façade were

dark, narrow hallways, peeling paint, and chipped tiles. Yet, the corridors and classrooms were less crowded than Riverview, with class sizes between nineteen and twenty-six students. The school had class sets of Chrome notebooks, and the classroom I visited had a smooth board operator, although the teacher was only able to use it as a projector since his computer was too old to run the software.

Although this district was somewhat better off than Riverview, it too had its share of problems. Contract disputes and an unpopular administration had driven away many teachers, and the district often chose not to replace them. However, like Riverview, there were some reasons for optimism. The old administration had been replaced, and both the student who attended this school and her teacher saw this as a positive change.

All three sites, then, had faced considerable challenges during the recession but had survived. Signs of hope were interwoven with future obstacles, and in many ways, these mixed outcomes seemed fairly typical of the participants' life experiences.

Participants

In case study methodology, “purposive and directed sampling through human instrumentation increases the range of data exposed and maximizes the researcher’s ability to identify emerging themes that take adequate account of contextual conditions and cultural norms” (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993, p.82). Participants are selected based on their ability to aid in developing and refining theory. Due to the nature of this study, purposeful sampling was employed to select individuals from the target population. I recruited participants during the orientation for the UB summer program, describing the study to the students and any parents in attendance. I purposefully recruited participants who were atypical college bound seniors, given the fact that they belonged to social groups who are underrepresented in higher education. However, based on their college aspirations and coursework, in many ways, they also did not match the typical labels associated with “at risk”

youth. Given the lack of attention to native-language background within the limited scholarship on precollege outreach program, I also carefully recruited a linguistically diverse group of students.

My main criterion for participation was that students would be the first generation in their family to graduate from college. I later learned that two of my participants—Gabrielle and Jared—had parents who had attended college in their native country. Interestingly, these students had self-identified as first-generation students since their parents were not able to use their degrees or knowledge of postsecondary institutions in America. Rather than excluding them from the study based on their parents' postsecondary education, I felt that their participation added another layer of depth since it complicated the label of "first-generation" by exploring what "counts" in terms of a postsecondary education.

During my initial recruitment, ten students, all of whom were from the Riverview and Breckinridge districts, expressed interest, and I followed up by sending written consent/assent forms (translated when necessary) to both them and their parents (see Appendix A). These ten participants (7 females and 3 males) ranged in grade level and familiarity with UB from a sophomore attending her first summer program to incoming seniors with three years of experience. As I worked with these ten students, I became particularly interested in the college preparations of the incoming seniors. While arguably students must begin preparing for college anywhere from eight to tenth grade by developing college aspirations and taking rigorous coursework (Cabrera & LaNasa, 2000), the younger students largely associated this transition with the distant future rather than their immediate realities.

The seniors, on the other hand, were beginning to seriously (re)consider their options by researching colleges and compiling their applications. Realizing that I needed to narrow down my participant pool in order to compile and present rich portraits of the students' experiences, I decided to follow only the five seniors who were interested in continuing the

study during their last year of high school. Table 3.1 provides a broad overview of these five participants' demographic data.

Table 3.1 Participants' demographic information

Name of Participant	Gender	Race	Nationality	Home Language
Jared	M	Hispanic/Asian	United States	Spanish
Ariel	F	Asian	United States	Vietnamese
Marie	F	Black	Liberian	French, Khran
Gabrielle	F	Hispanic	Dominican	Spanish
Savannah	F	Caucasian	United States	English

All participants came from low-income, single parent households, both of which are considered additional risk factors preventing college enrollment. The participants presented a range of nationalities, races, and native languages that reflected the diversity of UB programs around the country. Although African Americans made up the majority of students served by UB (44%), these national demographics were not represented within this particular program making it difficult to recruit more African American students.

Initially, I had also hoped to recruit an equal number of males and females, but again, the limited number of male students in the program made this difficult. Unlike the racial demographics, however, the low number of male students in this program reflected national trends as 2/3 of UB participants are female (Cahalan & Curtin, 2004). The unequal gender distribution of participants added an important dimension to this story since from 1988 females have outnumbered males at institutes of higher education (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2013).

Data Collection

Data collection was carried out by multiple qualitative research methods, including document review, participant observation, and interviewing. In addition, supplemental

gathering techniques were used, including field notes, confidence scales, diagrams, photographs, and questionnaires. Data collection occurred over the course of one year.

Students Textual and Visual Artifacts

During our first interview, I had students complete a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix B), which asked them to indicate their grade level, school, number of years in the UB program, nationality, years spent in the United States and, for multilingual participants, language proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. At this first meeting I also requested writing samples from students' junior year of high school to give me a baseline against which to compare future writing.

During both the UB summer program and their senior year, I collected multiple drafts (including brainstorm and outlines) of the college admissions essay from all students. Depending on the students' individual writing processes, this essay included anywhere between 3-10 drafts. I also collected written assignments—responses to sample essays and advice from college admissions officers, “show don't tell” exercises, and peer editing worksheets—surrounding this essay.

The second writing sample I gathered from students during the UB program was a research paper comparing and contrasting two colleges the students' were interested in attending. As part of this assignment, students also completed a graphic organizer to help them locate key pieces of information about each college, including admissions criteria, extracurricular opportunities, majors, scholarships, etc. Each student presented these papers to the class, and I recorded summaries of these presentations in my fieldnotes.

Both at the end of the summer and during the school year, I collected drawings and photographs that documented students writing processes', materials, and spaces. At the end of the summer all students submitted a drawing of the process and spaces surrounding a piece of writing they composed at home, in UB, and at school. The purpose of these drawings was

to stimulate recall during retrospective accounts of their writing processes and to highlight the resources available in each of these contexts. Wanting to see if available resources changed during the school year, I asked students to submit a photograph of the space in which they did most of their writing.

As the school year began, I knew that I would not be meeting as frequently with the participants, so I needed to develop a concrete tool that could be used during interviews to help them recall influences on their literacy development and writing process. Modifying a data collection tool and classroom activity originally developed by Ortmeier-Hooper (2013), I asked participants to construct a Literacy Contexts Map (see Appendix C), that required them to consider the people, places, groups, things, and values that either connected to or conflicted with school and writing. Some of these items could fit in either the conflict or connection category, and students spatially arranged the map so that the most significant influences were in the center. During an interview, students described each item on the map and explained why they placed it where they did. This map was used in interviews throughout the school year to give students the opportunity to identify how items on this map impacted particular writing assignments and educational decisions. At the exit interview, students returned to this map and were invited to make revisions to reflect resources that had changed or been previously unconsidered. Images of both the initial and final map were saved for comparison. Like the other visual artifacts, this activity was meant to stimulate recall during retrospective accounts.

Throughout the academic school year, students shared their academic writing from multiple disciplines. While most of the samples came from students' English classes, I also collected writing from history, economics, NJROTC, and criminal justice courses. By incorporating writing from different classes, I was able to see how different instructors, genres, and subject matter affected the textual features and writing processes of the students.

When students' used source texts in their writing, I also collected these in order to examine intertextuality with their writing.

I asked the students to submit multiple drafts and copies with teacher feedback, but this rarely occurred for two reasons: (1) students generally produced only one draft, and (2) students typically got minimal, if any, feedback on their work. Students varied in the number of writing samples they submitted. Ultimately, then, the writing samples I did not get became as much a part of the students' story as the ones I did as they gave me insights into the processes of production and interpretation surrounding them.

Finally, I asked students to complete scales (see Appendix D) rating their confidence and motivation with academic writing. The first of these asked students to rate their confidence with various academic writing tasks such as college admissions essays, research papers, and essay exams on a scale of one to ten. Since confidence is highly dynamic and contextual, I administered these scales at three different points during the year: before the UB summer program, after the summer program, and at the end of their senior year. Responding to themes of disengagement with academic writing, I designed a questionnaire using likert scales to better understand the underlying conditions surrounding students' motivation. This questionnaire provided me with a tool to validate themes emerging from my initial analysis of the data.

Institutional and Classroom Artifacts

In order to understand how students' texts and literacy practices were influenced by curricular and institutional decisions, I acquired course documents and policy statements from both UB and the students' high schools. At UB, I collected the Senior Seminar syllabus, the No Discount pledge, the program profile, and the student/faculty handbooks. From students' high schools, I gathered rubrics, assignment sheets, the program of studies, and district ELA standards. Finally, among teachers and advisors participating in the study, I

requested copies of letters of recommendation they had written for the students' college application.

Observations

From June 24, 2013 to August 2, 2013 I observed students' participation in the UB summer program. Most of the observations occurred during the students' two-hour long Senior Seminar Class, which was held every Tuesday and Thursday. During these observations, I took notes on how students managed their time; how they planned, revised, and edited their writing; and how they interacted with their peers, the teacher, and the tutor mentor. I also attended the No Discount Ceremony. During the No Discount Ceremony, I did not take notes due to the personal nature of the event. However, immediately afterwards, I recorded descriptions of artifacts and physical configurations along with synopses of the narratives research participants shared.

While I had initially planned on observing the students in their high school English classrooms, this was not always possible as I did not have access to two of the schools. I was able to observe Ariel's Creative Writing class four times, and I took notes on how she managed her time and her interactions with the teacher and classmates. Before she had dropped out of day school, I had arranged to observe Savannah's English class. After deciding to enroll in the online course, she invited me to observe her working on class assignments and attending meetings with the instructor; however, she later decided that she did not want me to attend these meetings. Therefore, I was only able to observe and take notes on her writing process and interactions for a post she created as part of an online discussion forum.

Interviews

This study relied heavily on student interviews, which occurred 6-9 times from June, 2013 to June, 2014. I met with students once before, twice during, and once immediately

after the UB summer program. While interviews before and after the program were longer (30-45 minutes), interviews during the program were necessarily brief (10-15 minutes) to accommodate for students' demanding schedule.

The interviews followed a semi-structured format in which I “first ask[ed] a series of structured questions and then prob[ed] more deeply, using open-ended questions in order to obtain more complete data” (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 452). I developed multiple interview protocol for students (see Appendix E). At the first interview, I asked students about their life histories and home/personal literacies. During the program, I asked students about their perceptions of UB events and their writing process for the college admissions essay and compare/contrast research paper. At the end of the program, interview questions asked students to reflect on their overall experience, their performance, and comparisons between UB and high school.

During the school year, interviews were longer (45-75 min) but more infrequent (bimonthly). Initially, I had interviewed students at a local coffee shop because I thought it would be a relaxing, non-institutional environment; however, I found it was chaotic and hard to hear. Both the participants and I decided it would be best to move the interviews to a library. The first school year interview was based on students' literacy maps and focused on resources that supported students' writing and educational aspirations.

Two interviews focused on academic writing samples. During these interviews, I asked students to describe their purposes, audiences, writing process, challenges, strengths, and resources (both within and beyond the classroom). A limitation of relying heavily on retrospective accounts is that participants may forget, conventionalize, or simplify information. In order to minimize these limitations, I incorporated stimulated elicitation techniques (literacy maps, writing samples, drawings/pictures) to “trigger and support memory as well as serving as a source for new reflection” (Prior, 2008, p. 189). In these

interviews, I had participants refer to their texts to select and explain sections that were especially interesting or troublesome for them. Sometimes, I selected parts of the texts myself based on my knowledge of academic conventions in various disciplines and my familiarity with the participants' background to guide discussions. For the last two interviews, questions focused on students' college admissions process (taking standardized tests, selecting college preparatory courses, applying, seeking financial resources, and enrolling).

Focus Group

This 60-90 minute focus group was held in May at a non-profit agency in Riverview that served immigrant communities. Several of the participants were familiar with this agency, so it served as a comfortable and convenient meeting place. Marie, Ariel, and Gabrielle attended and expressed multiple perspectives on their shared experience as UB participants and high school seniors. Questions focused on sources of information about colleges as well as their experiences with literacy over the academic year. I also used this time to explore salient themes emerging from their interviews. For instance, participants differed in their perceptions of peers and policies at UB, and I wanted them to engage in a dialogue to explore their perceptions.

Other Key Informants

Because students had limited knowledge of the political and institutional factors that influence their education, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with students' UB advisors, UB English teacher, and English teachers at both Ariel and Savannah's schools. Aware that these adult participants might be reluctant to commit to an audiorecorded interview, I also gave them the option to answer the same questions in the form of a written questionnaire. The UB English teacher, the UB director, and three English teachers participated in a thirty-minute interview, and one English teacher and UB advisor submitted questionnaires.

Data Analysis

After each meeting with these case study participants, I immediately transcribed the audiorecordings of our interviews. These interview transcripts, along with my field notes, and artifacts, were stored on a password-protected computer, using the qualitative software, Atlas, to organize and analyze the data. Drawing on thematic analysis (Glesne, 2011; Saldaña, 2009) as a framework to perform repeated rounds of qualitative coding, I examined students' identifications with and access to academic writing within my interview transcripts. During my first cycle, I followed a process of "open coding," creating descriptive words and short phrases that captured the essence of data segments. Following this initial round of analysis, I grouped similar codes to create patterns or broader categories, using my tacit and intuitive understandings to identify what data "look[ed] alike" and "[felt] alike" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.347).

The broader categories that emerged from this second round of coding included cultural, familial, institutional, teacher, and peer influences on writing. In moving towards a more thematic analysis, I used the filter feature within Atlas to generate reports that allowed me to compare data within these categories. Using these reports I generated analytical memos that captured significant themes within each case study. Next, I compared these analytical memos to identify themes that emerged across the cases. Finally, I triangulated this analysis with writing samples, visual artifacts, questionnaires, confidence scales, field notes, and interviews with other key informants.

These themes revealed that cultural and institutional identities enabled and constrained participants' academic writing in UB and their high schools. In response to these themes, I turned to the theoretical frameworks I articulated in Chapter I to develop a terminology that would help me discuss these negotiations. I recoded the data, using concepts and terms derived from theories of performance, Communities of Practice, literacy

sponsorship, and difference as resource. My qualitative analysis utilized both an inductive and deductive approach, as coding was grounded in both the data and existing theory.

Trustworthiness

To establish the soundness of the study, naturalistic research must be evaluated for trustworthiness. According to Erladson et al. (1993), “trustworthiness is established by the use of techniques that provide truth value through credibility, applicability through transferability, consistency through dependability, and neutrality through confirmability” (p. 132). While adhering to these tenants, as a researcher I questioned the possibility of neutrality. Based on this position, I chose to trace my subjectivities rather than aiming for objectivity.

Tracing Subjectivities and Positionality. My initial inquiries emerged while teaching English in the Upward Bound summer program as I wondered how this intervention and its unique setting ultimately impacted its participants’ future educational goals. Early on, I recognized that my role as a former teacher created subjectivities that could not be erased and could even benefit my design, access, rapport and interpretations. After completing the data collection, I moved back into this teacher role, deciding to teach freshman English to the UB bridge students so that I could use my research to give back to a community that had enriched my life. Once again, this role had many benefits as it helped me consider the implications of my research for FYC and build even stronger connections with research participants.

However, given the possibilities of role confusion, I felt an even stronger need to monitor my subjectivities, to reflect on my preconceived notions as well as my effects on the participants’ experiences and responses. (Glesne, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Wolcott, 2005). As I progressed through the study, I had to constantly trace my subjectivities in order to learn from my participants rather than letting past relationships or my own investments in the UB program obscure the rich knowledge they had to offer.

In sharing their stories with me, I knew these participants were giving me the gift of their time, experience, and trust. In return, I felt a responsibility to both them and other first-generation students to construct credible interpretations that can promote greater access to academic literacies and postsecondary opportunities. This obligation intimidated me, and I often wondered if I had a right to do research with this population. Based on my positionality as a White, middle-class, native English speaker affiliated with the university, I worried about the power dimensions between me and the participants. I also felt concerned that these cultural and class differences could position me as a sort of academic tourist, come to study the exotic “other,” a position imbued with implications of colonization and misinterpretation. Believing that no researcher can be completely innocent of these charges, ultimately, I had to adopt a “good enough methodology,” one that “recognizes the impossibility of eradicating power relations, but does name them and trace the degree to which those tensions and imbalances inform the process of investigation and resulting research” (Appleman, 2003, p. 83). A crucial step in implementing this “good enough methodology” was to make my design and analysis transparent, revealing what I did, why I did it, and what limitations I faced.

Credibility. To establish credibility in this study, five strategies were used: prolonged engagement, triangulation, a researcher’s notebook, peer debriefing, and polyvocality.

(1). Prolonged engagement allowed me to develop a positive rapport with the participants. This relationship between us enhanced the communication during data gathering. Additionally, in this study, persistent observation allowed me to witness a wide range of behaviors and perspectives under a variety of circumstances and settings.

(2). The triangulation of data gathering by multiple sources, methods, and theories offer greater confidence in research findings (Erlandson, 1993). In this study, I triangulated data across sources, cases, and settings over the time span of a year. I also used multiple theories to analyze the data.

(3). The researcher's notebook was my tool to process information while collecting data. After both the focus group and individual interviews, I would record notes about the participants' appearance and demeanor, key points in the interview, potential interpretations, and follow up questions. I also used it to record and reflect on the intersubjectivity between me and the participants (Chiseri-Strater, 1996). Based on the participants' reactions to my requests for data and interview questions, I often found a need to modify my data collection procedures to maintain rapport and interest in the study. I also used it during the analysis phase to become more reflective and reflexive about my interpretations. Finally, this notebook gave me an opportunity to reflect on ways that I was possibly disrupting the students' literacy practices and to consider the ethical implications and effects on my research.

(4). During the data analysis process, I asked a peer in the field of English education to independently code portions of my data, using her insights to refine my analysis. I also shared my interpretations with fellow graduate students who likewise strengthened my interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

(5). Throughout the process of data collection, interpretation, and narration, I found numerous ways to develop polyvocality by giving my participants a voice in my research. This strategy helped me to guard against some of the misunderstandings that occur when researchers work with participants whose experiences are very different from their own. On a small scale, I conducted member checking of my interpretations by offering oral summaries of what the participants had said during each interview. I also asked them to respond collectively to themes that had been emerging from the data during the focus group. At the exit interview, I presented each participant with a summary vignette that captured themes emerging from the data, audiorecording their responses so I could modify my interpretations

as necessary (Tisdell, 2000). Finally, I sent sections of the final report that were personally relevant to them over email so they could comment on its accuracy.

I tried to create a polyphonic text, weaving the students' voices with my own by quoting amply from multiple written and spoken texts. This approach was important to me because, although the decisions to include or exclude quotations ultimately place the researcher in a dominant role, polyvocality is still less colonizing than the univocal narrative. These ample quotations also established a different type of credibility than the univocal narrative since, to some extent, readers can see the evidence for themselves and assume shared responsibility for the theories being constructed (Chiseri-Strater, 1996).

Transferability. In keeping with the qualitative epistemology, the goal is to establish transferability not replicability. This criterion of transferability can be explained as “demonstrating the applicability of one set of findings to another context” (Erlandson et al., 1993, p.33). Purposive sampling and thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) were two techniques for providing transferability to this study. In presenting the perceptions and experiences of my participants, I was not trying to argue that they were “typical” or “representative” of potential first-generation students. Rather, by using thick descriptions to situate these individuals in a particular time, place, and social context, this approach will allow educators to determine the transferability of these findings to their own work with underrepresented students.

Dependability. This criterion is defined as the “means for taking into account both factors of instability and factors of phenomenal or design induced change” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 299). In other words, the researcher tries to elucidate conditions in the phenomena being studied as well as changes in design created by a constantly refined and deeper understanding. Within this study, my researcher's notebook was used to enhance dependability.

Summary

This study used a qualitative design to examine how UB influenced participants' identifications with and access to academic writing during their senior year of high school and the college admissions process. The naturalistic paradigm bases its holistic assumption on the description and understanding of multiple realities. By constructing multiple case studies and conducting extended research across varied sources, I was able to capture these divergent realities. In this study, data collection and analysis moved simultaneously, contributing to these rich and multilayered accounts by positioning reality as an ongoing construction. As a first step in developing these detailed descriptions, the next chapter, "Participants as Individuals," offers rich portraits of the participants based on the demographic data I collected and analyzed. Rather than simply profiling the participants, however, this next chapter will provide an important lens for interpreting the main findings of the study. As I discussed in chapter 2, identity construction and literacy development are simultaneously individual and social, dynamic and stable. Chapter three will support this premise by highlighting the participants' individuality and showing how their personal background has contributed to their current and future trajectories.

Chapter IV

Participants as Individuals

We can claim that experimental studies strip the context, but in their own ways, so do case studies and ethnographies. Even those researchers who claim to account for the context must disregard or decline to report most of what they record. [. . .] The issue is not which is more Real, but how each creates, through selection and ordering of detail, an illusion or version of Reality. (Newkirk, 1992, p. 133)

My informants, people in their own rights, living in their cultural spaces, enter my pages reincarnated. My processed version of them exists somewhere between my mind, my fieldnotes, and eventually my reader. (Sunstein, 1996, p. 177)

The year that I spent with Jared, Marie, Ariel, Gabrielle, and Savannah was a gift that I wish I could share more fully with readers. Yet, as with any case study, I've had to strip down the reality of their experiences to produce a cohesive and compelling narrative. This chapter provides a richer, more individualized perspective on each participant than is possible within the more thematically-oriented chapters that follow. Much of the dissertation focuses on the students' academic writing during the UB summer program, college admissions process, and senior year of high school. Yet their pasts significantly shaped their literacy, experiences in the program and educational trajectories. In this section, I offer a brief overview of my relationship with participants, their early literacy experiences, self-sponsored literacies, prior education, families, and linguistic and cultural backgrounds in order to acknowledge important differences between them and to provide a foundation for what follows

Jared: Superman or Clark Kent?

Today, I interviewed my first participant—Jared. Before he arrived, I sat at a metal bistro in front of Starbucks, reviewing my interview questions, just so I wouldn't end up stammering or having nothing to say. I resisted the urge to get a coffee; the last thing my nerves needed was caffeine. When he arrived, he was confident without being arrogant. As I reminded him that he did not have to answer any questions that made him uncomfortable, he reassured me, "Don't worry, I don't mind talking to people." And he didn't—with little probing he talked for nearly an hour. A good researcher puts participants at ease; with Jared, it was the other way around. I hope my other interviews are this comfortable. (Researcher's Notebook, 6/10/2013)

Shortly after his birth in a small town near Riverview, Jared moved to Peru for six years with his mother to care for an ailing grandmother, returning to his hometown at the start of first grade. Soon after their arrival, Jared's parents divorced, and his early childhood was spent moving around Riverview from one dilapidated apartment to the next. For the first three months after the divorce, Jared was unable to see his father, and once they were reunited, ensuing hostilities between his parents left him feeling torn in his allegiances.

Although Jared initially indicated that neither of his parents had a strong educational background, both had some college experience. His father, for instance, had taken some classes at MIT to become a technician, and his mother earned a degree in journalism in Peru but was unable to use it in the U.S. Jared largely discredited these experiences, explaining that his parent's limited English and knowledge of the U.S. educational system made it difficult for them to help him with homework or college planning. Jared had an older sister who had attended a prestigious university in the Northeast and earned a degree in

architecture. At the time of the study, she was living in New York, but Jared still frequently called her to discuss college plans.

Although he spoke Spanish at home, with the exception of a few emails with extended family in Peru, Jared rarely had opportunities to read or write in his native language. He reported his proficiency levels in Spanish were low, and this made him feel “like I lost myself kind of. Like I lost something special to me” (personal communication, June 24, 2014). Jared never really felt fully comfortable with reading and writing in English either. When Jared had returned to the U.S. from Peru, he was enrolled in his school’s ESL program, which he exited at the end of his seventh grade year. His earliest recollections of reading and writing included sounding out words with his first grade teacher and being introduced to Dr. Seuss. At that time, he remembered, “I was a really good writer. Well, I think I was. I could just like write. Even though I spelled a bunch of things wrong. I wrote a lot of pages when I was in first grade” (personal communication, June 24, 2014).

Despite this promising beginning, Jared struggled with academic literacy during his secondary education. When the study began, he had read one book, *The Outsiders*, which he liked because it reminded him of a play. Generally, however, he skimmed over reading assignments or used the savior of many reluctant readers—Sparknotes—to get by in his English classes. He found writing difficult and time consuming, explaining, “I get really aggravated. I start days before the due date to try to put it together, but I just can’t. Sometimes I feel like I put everything in one sentence. Then I have to write stuff supporting it, but I don’t know what to write” (personal communication, June 24, 2014). The writing samples I collected at our first interview confirmed his self appraisals, containing the comment, “Short, no conclusion, grammar, proofread.”

Yet, in many ways, these challenges failed to capture his literate potential. Jared enjoyed music, had started playing the guitar at the age of fourteen, and spoke fondly of

artists like Frank Sinatra, Engelbert Humperdink, and Tom Jones—surprise favorites for an eighteen-year-old male. According to him, he turned to these singers to inspire his own writing, trying to capture their mood and rhythm, and these songs were often playing in the background when he was writing his essays for Senior Seminar during study periods at UB. When his group was asked to compose a commercial jingle as part of Creative Problem Solving day, he took the lead, developing both the melody and the lyrics, experiencing none of his usual writer's block.

Though he enjoyed music and showed a lot of talent in this area, he sometimes struggled to motivate himself to practice his guitar or compose songs on his own. I collected the songbook he was asked to compile for his songwriting elective at UB, and it was nearly empty. When I asked him how often he played his guitar, he noted that he hadn't been practicing because the strings had broken, and he hadn't gotten around to replacing them. Despite his strength in this area, then, he did not seem to spend a lot of time developing these personal literacies. Although Jared did not want to add anything to his profile, he was really glad that I had included this part about his songwriting. He wanted readers to know of his potential as a writer.

Jared became involved in UB based on a referral from one of his teachers. Attending a presentation about the program, he recalled, "I liked what the program was about, helping you get into college because I had no idea about it" (personal communication, March 12, 2014). Jared's first week in the program was rough. All the other students from his school were seniors, and he was the only boy in his classes. He soon found that he didn't mind being surrounded by girls and believed that learning to talk to them had helped him gain confidence.

Caught between his mom and dad, Spanish and English, and his desire and inertia to write, Jared was conflicted in his familial, national, and authorial selves. He was eager to

please those around him but also wanted to stay true to his ideal sense of self. Jared idolized Superman, whose invincibility he found heroic and mortality he found relatable. This description seemed to fit Jared as his motivation levels and confidence could vary markedly. Overall, however, he was very eager to learn and grow and generally pushed himself both in UB and school.

Marie: “A Fierce and Indomitable Spirit”

When I first interviewed Marie for Upward Bound, I wondered if she would make it in the program. She had emigrated from the militarily turbulent Ivory Coast in 2004 and moved to the Northeast to live with her aunt. Her spoken language, strongly inflected by French, was difficult to understand and she seemed reluctant to open up. However, the more we spoke, the more I was struck by her passionate determination to succeed! Although she found school academically challenging, she displayed a fierce and indomitable spirit and would stay up all night to learn if necessary. Nothing would stop her from learning, she said. (Letter of Recommendation, UB Director)

As a Liberian refugee, Marie was continuing to grapple with the horrors of the civil war she had experienced as a child. In many ways, the war had left her an orphan. Her father was killed before the family could escape to a refugee camp in Ghana. After surviving two civil wars in Liberia, her mother was too traumatized to care for Marie and her twin brother and sent them to live with family in Riverview. Eventually, her mother disappeared.

Once in Riverview, limited resources left them shuttling between the homes of various family members, and Marie assumed financial responsibility by getting a part time job tutoring students at the middle school she attended. In many ways, this job came with a valuable support network as her boss, a former teacher, encouraged her to join UB and often provided meals to Marie and her brother. This outside support was particularly important

since Marie felt that her family did not care about her college ambitions. Despite her belief that she was pretty much on her own, all of her extended family attended her high school graduation, which she described as the happiest day of her life, despite the longing to have her parents attend.

Marie's earliest encounter with literacy was the French and English books that Red Cross volunteers brought to the refugee camp. From the time she arrived in America at the age of 9 until her first year of high school, Marie was enrolled in the ELL program and indicated that the Rosetta Stone software her teacher given to her was the most significant influence on her English acquisition. Although she felt more proficient in English than French, which she continued taking in school, she found the academic vocabulary in school challenging and seemed to view her multilingual background as challenge rather than an asset: "We constantly read, and I'm not really good 'cause I speak two other language, so it's kind of hard. I read at school, do all English. Then I go home, my Mom's speaking French, and I've got other people speaking the other language [Krahn], so it's kind of hard. Sometime, I actually write in French, and I'm like, 'oh snap, this is English homework,' and I forget" (personal communication, July 2, 2014). Despite these challenges, she excelled academically, regularly earning a spot on her school's honor roll.

Out of all of the participants in the study, I knew Marie the best. She had been in my English class her first year in the program, sought my help with numerous scholarship essays, and was in my freshman English class after the study ended. That first summer in UB, Marie had arrived two days later than all the other students due to her commitments with National Junior ROTC and was lost on campus. As I walked her to her next class, she told me that she couldn't write, and rejected any efforts I made to persuade her to keep an open mind. During that first week, she was typically late to class and quiet once she arrived. In her own words, she recalled, "My first week at UB was a disaster, I hardly knew people and I was angry that

the program started right after school was over. I am ashamed to admit that my attitude towards the TMs [tutor mentors], students and staff were unpleasant (Upward Bound Bridge Essay). Initially, then, I viewed Marie as a reluctant student and writer.

She was the opposite. After I read the personal essay she wrote for my class, I knew she could write. Her realistic dialogue and vivid details immersed me in her story of getting caught shoplifting as a child. When I saw her again during our next conference, I told her that she'd lied to me when she said she couldn't write. She smiled, knowing I was right. When she told me she wanted to participate in the study a year later, she still had that essay, which she brought to our first interview. She became a very active student in class—asking questions, meeting with me during study periods for extra help—and outside of class, she amazed everyone in the program with her athletic and artistic abilities.

Outside of school, Marie participated in a range of extracurricular activities and created lyrics and choreography for her own music. She was incredibly proud of her heritage, organizing numerous multicultural events at her school and designing her own prom dress to incorporate West African styles. Marie had faced more trauma and hardships than most people, but saw these obstacles as opportunities for growth explaining, “I takes pains as the more pain, the stronger you become” (“Woody Brittain Scholarship Essay”). Indeed, when asked how she would describe herself to readers, she offered, “Someone who's determined, I guess. I will not stop until I just get what I want, and that's to be a doctor. Even though it's going to be hard and stuff ,I'm going to work hard to get there” (personal communication, June 18, 2014). Ultimately, this resiliency would be key to helping Marie to overcome multiple barriers within her educational trajectory.

Ariel: Defying Labels

She feels very comfortable with herself. She's very quiet. At the same token she wasn't afraid to express herself in any way (Junior Year English Teacher).

She has a strong voice; she doesn't mind sharing, but she doesn't do it out loud, she'll only do it on paper (Senior Year English Teacher)

In writing a profile of Ariel, the best characterization I can give is of someone impossible to pin down or label. Simultaneously reserved and expressive, big hearted and misanthropic, a diligent and disinterested student, she defied categorization. Every time I saw her, she sported a different look—studious spectacles one day, a nose ring and bright red lipstick the next, her accessories matched her multilayered personality.

Ariel was eager to help me with my research and incredibly generous with her time. She was the first student to sign on to the study and responded to any emails or texts almost immediately. When I observed her in English class, she was the only one to befriend the girl who sat in front of her, a brave move given the ridicule this individual often received from peers. She described herself as “the kind of person that puts others before me” and “will accept anyone as a friend,” but also expressed, “I am not a people person” (“Capture a Moment Essay”).

Born in Riverview to Vietnamese refugees, Ariel was the oldest of four daughters, two of whom attended the same high school. From an early age, she carried enormous responsibilities. Having discovered her father's body after he hung himself in their attic, Ariel became her family's translator at the age of six as EMT workers tried to communicate with her mother. Her earliest memories of learning to read or write were getting yelled at by her father for poor penmanship. At home, both she and her family rarely read or wrote. Although she felt more proficient in English than Vietnamese, Ariel indicated she did not have a very

good academic vocabulary and needed to work on her grammar. She never received ESL services. While she initially took classes in Vietnamese at her church, she found it too difficult and eventually gave up. She and her mother experienced somewhat of a language barrier, which could make it difficult for them to communicate, especially when it came to college planning. Her mother expressed an interest in these plans, but Ariel found it frustrating to translate this information into Vietnamese.

Ariel loved art and would often become so immersed in her work that she could lose all track of time. At times, she would become equally invested in her writing, yet more often she rushed through assignments, trying to get them over with as soon as possible. The only time she wrote outside of school was letters to her best friend, her “human diary” who had left for college the year before. Ariel’s busy schedule seemed to reflect her eclectic tastes, and her extracurricular interests ranged from lacrosse to the Vietnamese Eucharist society, where she performed traditional dances at an annual multicultural festival.

Ariel explained that she got involved with the Upward Bound program because one of her friends wanted to join. Although they both applied, only Ariel got in, and her friend was not accepted until the next summer. She found these circumstances awkward and was not going to attend until her friend convinced her to go. Like Jared and Marie, Ariel was nervous at the start of the program because she did not know anyone but quickly met new friends. Although she had a more positive experience her first summer than the second, she was generally glad that she participated in UB.

When asked what she wanted readers to know about her, Ariel offered an emphatic response: “I’m not like the other kids that Shauna interviewed. I’m more honest. I speak with my mouth and not with my mind. I may seem like I’m a very strong person, but I’m really not. It’s just an image that you put on to show other people. And being bilingual sucks” (personal communication, June 17, 2014). As a researcher, I found that Ariel often motivated me to

revisit the interpretations I was forming since her opinions towards UB, writing, and the other students at her school changed throughout the year. Ultimately, her complexity enriched my understanding, forcing me to look beyond my straightforward assumptions to more nuanced interpretations of the students' experiences.

Gabrielle: “A Mixer of Black and White”

Unable to find a quiet spot for an interview, I met with Gabrielle on the front steps of Reed Hall. Up since 5:30 that morning to get in a run before breakfast, the hour before lights out was her only down time—and she was spending it with me. While her friends walked downtown for some ice cream to refresh themselves from a day that topped out at 93°, we talked literacy while trying to swat away the mosquitoes whining in our ears. She laughed off my concerns that the heat and bugs would become a distraction. “Don’t, worry,” she told me, “I’m used to it; I’m Dominican.”
(Researcher’s Notebook, 7/9/2013)

When Gabrielle described herself as a “mixer of Black and White,” she was referring to her racial heritage—her mother was light-skinned, her father dark. In many ways, though, this phrase encompassed multiple facets of her personality. She rarely saw things in black and white terms, often searching out the gray areas and hedging her opinions with her favorite phrase, “Everything depends.” Charismatic and outgoing, she actively brought together different races and cultures by organizing a multicultural festival, helping new international students navigate the school, and continuing to learn about different languages and customs.

Before emigrating from the Dominican Republic in sixth grade, Gabrielle had attended a private school. Her parents felt that she and her sister could receive a better education in the United States, so they moved to Riverview, where they settled permanently after a short stay in Florida. Gabrielle’s father had retired and returned to the Dominican Republic. Her mother worked two jobs—on an assembly line and in housekeeping—because

her teaching credentials did not transfer to the United States, and supporting the family kept her from developing the English proficiency she would need to acquire a higher-paying job. With her parents separated and her mother working long hours, Gabrielle assumed caregiving responsibilities for her younger sister, who would often accompany her to interviews. They had a close bond, and Gabrielle indicated that setting an example motivated her to excel academically.

Regardless of the circumstances, Gabrielle maintained a positive outlook. When her move to Florida meant that she could no longer receive ELL services, she reported that being forced to sink or swim in mainstream classes helped her improve her English by giving her more opportunities to converse and compete with native English speaking peers. Placed back in ELL classes upon returning to Riverview, she was equally glad, describing these classes as “more homey” and supportive. Although she had tested out of ELL upon entering high school, she asked to return to the program during her Junior year because she felt she needed extra grammar instruction. At the time of our first interview, she had exited the program again to create room in her schedule for courses in Criminal Justice, her intended major. Though more proficient in Spanish than English, Gabrielle felt that this was beginning to change since she did not have an opportunity to study Spanish at school. She hoped college would mean more opportunities to hone her language skills and planned to pursue a minor in Spanish.

Of all the participants, she was probably the most academically prepared, regularly earning a spot on her school’s honor role; she was also the most consistent and measured in her perspectives. Because she was not initially accepted into the summer program at UB, she had only attended one year. Overall, her experiences with the program were the most limited, which may explain why she did not hold strong opinions either way about her experiences. Working with Gabrielle, then, gave me insights on the students’ who had varying levels of

experience and engagement with the program. When asked what she wanted readers to know about her, she expressed her characteristic sense of optimism: “I feel that anyone can do anything. It doesn't matter if they come from Mexico, Puerto Rico, wherever they come from, they can do anything if they put their mind to it. I had great teachers and great people in my life that helped me feel confident in myself. If you have confidence, I think you have everything” (personal communication, June 19, 2014).

Savannah: “A Free Bird”

Since working with Savannah as a freshman, she has tackled initiatives independently. She has shown this maturity by completing assignments and being both mentally and physically prepared for class. She did not look around to see what others were doing before making the right choice. (Letter of Recommendation from Freshman English teacher and homeroom advisor)

Guarded in her answers and sometimes reluctant to share her writing, Savannah rarely opened up and often shyly twirled a stray wisp of hair around her fingers when trying to decide how to respond to my questions. I first met Savannah when she was in my UB English class, and based on this relationship, I knew it took her time to warm up to sharing her thoughts and experiences. In class, she rarely talked and would often stare at the blank computer screen until I would pepper her with questions about her topic. After these brief conferences, she would begin to write. In our first interview, she noted, “that helped a lot like over the summer when I couldn't think of essays to write and you asked me a lot of questions, and then when I wrote on my own, or when I was writing for school, I would just write a question and then write a different question to that, and that was easier to write” (personal communication, June 17, 2013). In interviews her answers were typically brief, and, much like our writing conferences, I had to be prepared to ask her a lot of follow up

questions. Yet, once she became comfortable, both her writing and responses to my questions became detailed and insightful, and our conversations would easily last an hour.

Raised in Breckenridge, Savannah's parents were divorced, and to escape from the cycle of poverty her family had faced, she decided to move in with her father in the seventh grade since he was more supportive of her educational goals. Her mother and two older siblings were all unemployed and living at her grandmother's house. The fear of becoming like them fueled her desire to attend college: "My goal in life is to never have to live at my grandmother's house. I feel like no one in my family has made an effort to do anything with their lives, so I'm gonna be better than them" (personal communication, December 18, 2013). Savannah had a close relationship with her father. Since he often wrote up car sales for his job at an auto dealership, Savannah first started writing to emulate him. She noted that he pushed her to attend college but had no idea how to help her. This is where Upward Bound came in.

Savannah first learned about UB as a sophomore when someone anonymously nominated her and she received an invitation to attend the informational presentation where slides of special activities, like rollerblading, prompted her to apply. While she initially did not get into the summer program, she reapplied and was accepted as an incoming junior. Describing the application process, Savannah recalled, "I didn't know what I was missing so I wasn't really disappointed when I didn't get accepted, but if I would have known, then I would have been really sad, because it just like gives me something to do in the summer" (personal communication, December 18, 2013). For Savannah, then, UB was both a recreational outlet and pathway to college.

At home, Savannah enjoyed writing in her journal and blogging every night. She had anonymously published a poem in her school's literary magazine, but stopped submitting when writers were required to attend regular meetings, expressing discomfort at being around

the other members. While she often avoided sharing samples of her school writing, Savannah was very eager to share her poetry, notes to friends, and journal with me. When I would ask her questions about what she was working on in school, she would often try to direct the conversation back to her personal literacies. She loved writing, as long as it wasn't for school, describing herself as "a free bird" who did not like to meet requirements or deadlines. She frequently wished that school writing gave her more opportunities to write about important relationships in her life and to read the "teenage mushy romance drama" that she pursued during her spare time (personal communication, June 17, 2013).

In the Spring of her senior year, Savannah's father became too ill to work, so she dropped out of day school and got a full-time job to help pay their expenses. Only needing four credit hours in English to graduate, she signed up for an online community education course that would meet these requirements. As Savannah's hours at work increased, her interest in school, UB, and the study waned, and I lost contact after March. Since I was unable to collect as much data from Savannah as the other participants, I wondered whether or not I should include her experiences in my findings. However, as the following chapters will show, though incomplete, her story is critical because it draws attention to the challenges first-generation students face, even in the absence of racial and linguistic barriers.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have introduced you to Jared, Marie, Ariel, Gabrielle, and Savannah. Maintaining their college aspirations in the face of significant obstacles, these students had similar educational goals and backgrounds that led them to pursue the UB program. All came from low-income, single parent households, and, as a result, assumed significant financial and caregiving responsibilities. Among four of the participants, their diverse linguistic and national backgrounds posed additional challenges to navigating the U.S. educational system. Even for Savannah, her family's low educational levels created information barriers. In

addition to these challenges, the participants attended schools in resource-poor, urban districts with high student to staff ratios. Without UB, then, their access to academic support systems would be limited. In light of this, the fact that UB had to initially turn Gabrielle and Savannah away from the summer program highlights some of the limitations of pre-college outreach programs in addressing broader educational inequities.

Due to such challenges, these participants could easily be labeled “at risk” students. Yet, simply highlighting their vulnerability masks their resiliency. Indeed, given the opportunity to speak to readers directly, most of them wanted to emphasize their strengths and ability to overcome obstacles. While they found academic writing challenging, each displayed a greater aptitude within their self-sponsored literacies. Furthermore, while their families were unable to supply “college knowledge,” they all attributed their college aspirations to their parents. It is important to note that along the challenges they faced, each of these participants also possessed significant aspirational, navigational, familial, cultural, and linguistic resources that, along with UB, facilitated their college access.

Despite these similarities, a key finding that I hope to have emphasized within this chapter is that each participant also presented considerable differences. Their native language, levels of proficiency, educational history, nationalities, interests, and motivations varied considerably. For this reason, labels like first-generation college student, second-language writer, or underrepresented populations must be used with caution. While these terms can begin to point to shared needs, teachers, schools, and precollege outreach programs must get to know their students individually in order to provide effective instruction. Qualitative researchers share this responsibility, and through both this chapter and those that follow, I hope to offer the type of rich portraits that can help and inspire educators to become better acquainted with these populations.

To accomplish this objective, the next chapter will provide a detailed analysis of the institutional policies, social interactions, and material conditions within UB and the high schools that enabled and constrained these individual students' literacy development. Building on these findings, chapter 6 will argue that, in addition to the constraints posed by participants' in-school trajectories, their college access and success was also threatened by the cultural conflicts they experienced during the admissions process. As I will illustrate in both chapters, to some extent participation in UB both counteracted and was attenuated by these barriers. Such observations will support my overarching claim that UB creates a liminal space that presents opportunities for significant yet temporary identity explorations.

Chapter V

Literacy Sponsorship in High School and UB: The Impact of (De)segregation, Investment, and Authenticity

Marking the official start of every UB summer program, the No Discount Ceremony quickly set the tone for the six weeks ahead. Clutching small white candles with cardboard drip guards, students and staff congregated on the dormitory lawn in three concentric circles. A ripple moved from the inner circles of administrators and teachers to the outer ring of students, as each group lit the others' candles to symbolize their commitment to one another. After candles were lit, each member of the community pledged their "full respect for the inherent worth of each person and for that person's feelings, opinions, ideas and well being." Despite the gentle breeze that threatened to extinguish the flames, the director asked the congregation to ensure that each member's candle remained lit as a token of the community's ongoing support in the face of obstacles and challenges.

Dusk fell, and the candles slowly burned as individual students and staff testified to the importance of the No Discount Policy, often shortened to "No D," in their lives. Amid tears and hugs, returning students recounted the times they had been discounted at home and at high school before gaining the acceptance they needed to transform their lives and become better students. Among the case study participants, Jared was the only one to speak. In a transformation narrative, he recounted how the opportunity to "be himself" at UB helped him to become more sociable and improve his grades. Once the newcomers to the program learned the conventions of this transformation narrative, they began sharing their own challenges and goals for the future. To establish this policy as an ongoing ritual, the group

was asked to remind each other, “No D,” any time they heard anyone discounting themselves or another member of the community (fieldnotes, June, 26, 2013).

I open this chapter with a scene from the No Discount Ceremony because it offers a concrete example of how UB policies and practices shaped the social dynamics and identities surrounding literacy practices like the testimonials the students shared. These social influences on literacy often contrasted with what participants encountered in their high schools. Specifically, I argue here that both the participants’ high schools and UB acted as significant sponsors of literacy, “any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable support, teach, and model as well as regulate suppress or withhold literacy—and gain advantage by it in some way” (Brandt, 2001). However, the degree to which these communities enabled or suppressed writing was impacted by broader social discourses, institutional policies, teacher expectations, and peer dynamics. In examining the relationship between these factors, I found that distant influences often shaped the more immediate interactions surrounding writing (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1. Macro and micro level influences on writing.



Ortmeier-Hooper & Enright (2011) have indicated that conducting research with adolescent multilingual students requires synthetic, recursive, and dialogic approaches that can account for the interaction of multiple factors surrounding their writing. Specifically, they recommend situating text, classroom, and learner-based studies within their broader institutional and socio-political contexts. The analysis presented within this chapter addresses this call for research in secondary schools to map out the territory in which it occurs. As this diagram indicates, social discourses on race, linguistic background, and meritocracy infused institutional policies and practices. These policies, in turn, structured student-teacher interactions and peer dynamics. To analyze the intersections between these macro and micro-level influences on literacy and identity, this chapter draws upon two theoretical frameworks: Literacy Sponsorship and Communities of Practice (CoP).³ To make my discussion of these theoretical frameworks more concrete, this next section applies their main concepts to the No Discount Ceremony presented at the start of the chapter. I then use these analytical lenses to compare the social interactions surrounding writing in UB and the high schools. Finally, I examine how these competing experiences influenced participants' educational trajectories and writerly identities.

Literacy Sponsorship within a Community of Practice: The Case of UB

Challenging theoretical perspectives that focus on local literacy practices, Brandt & Clinton (2002) argue that literacy research needs to bridge gaps between macro and micro-level influences on reading and writing. In this article, they point to the concept of literacy sponsorship to highlight one possible analytical tool for connecting these local and distant practices. The theory of literacy sponsorships derives from Brandt's earlier research (2001), which documents the life histories of eighty individuals grouped into birth cohorts spanning a

³ While both of these theoretical models suggest that local practices can also affect distant practices, the design of this study does not permit this sort of analysis.

decade. Based on these interviews, she found that accelerating economic changes interacted with regional and familial influences to limit and facilitate literacy development. These distant and local interests surrounding reading and writing are what she refers to as literacy sponsors. In applying this concept of literacy sponsorship to the No Discount Policy and Ceremony, there is a similar tension between micro and macro-level factors. Since this policy is a central tenant of all UB programs, the official version of it has been shaped at a national level. However, the way it is enacted locally varies. For instance, as I discuss in detail later on in this section, participants often practiced the policy in officially unsanctioned ways.

As a constitutive component of Lave & Wenger's (1991) situated learning theory, the CoP perspective complements this connection between local and distant influences on learning. While originally focusing on professional apprenticeships, CoP's relevance to other learning environments has made it increasingly popular for examining writing development in classrooms (Haneda, 2006; Kanno, 2003; Morita, 2004; Prior, 1998; Toohey, 1996, 1998, 2000) and online spaces (Yi, 2010). Evolving from Lave's (1988) earlier work, situated learning theory challenges dualisms between the individual and the collective by arguing that people enact knowledge by participating in a sociocultural community. Explaining how individuals learn through social practice, Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) highlights the process by which novices gradually acquire the requisite skills needed to display mastery and become full members of the community (p. 35). This concept of LPP was evident during the No Discount Ceremony as new members of the community patterned their transformation narratives after the conventions the old-timers had established.

Extending this work, Wenger (1998) defines CoPs as groups of people who negotiate meaning through mutual engagement, a joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire. These characteristics of a CoP were present as UB participants negotiated meaning during the No Discount Ceremony. The negotiation of meaning emerges from participation, ongoing social

interactions informing interpretations of the world, and reification, fossilized understandings within the community. The No Discount Ceremony and the way it was enacted in practice reflect these dual processes of negotiation and reification. There was a codified version of the No Discount policy in course syllabi and program handbooks that represented a form of reification. However, in practice, many students simultaneously acknowledged and dismissed this policy. In a move similar to the Southern practice of saying, “Bless her heart, but . . .,” UB participants often used the phrase “No D or anything, but . . .” to soften criticism. The way in which this policy impacted students’ social interactions, then, was subject to ongoing negotiations⁴.

In terms of mutual engagement, the ritual theorist and anthropologist Victor Turner (1975) has noted that shared rituals strengthen social bonds. They also create what he refers to as “liminality,” or “any condition outside the peripheries of everyday life in which people are dislocated from their social structure” (p. 47). Within the No Discount Ceremony, the symbolic gestures of members lighting one another’s flames and configuring themselves into circles helped to create an embodied response to the words of the pledge. It also provided concrete tokens to reflect the group’s shared repertoire of practices. Beyond simply creating shared practices, this ceremony and policy established a joint enterprise by forming a community in which members could come together to pursue their joint college aspirations.

In the CoP framework, learning is tied to identity. Specifically, Wegner (1998) argues that learning transforms “who we are and what we can do . . . it is a process of becoming—to become a certain person or, conversely, to avoid becoming a certain person” (p. 215).

Individuals’ sense of self-hood emerges from associating themselves with communities

⁴ While the use of the word community and the CoP perspective has been criticized for promoting a view of learning neglects conflict and difference (Canagarajah, 2012; Gee, 2009), Wegner (1998) has noted that negotiation of meaning often involves disagreement and that CoP can include cliques and factions.

through participation and differentiating themselves through non-participation. Therefore, identity formation within CoPs is an ongoing process of identification—association and differentiation—and negotiation, ability to control what it means to be a member of the community. In a similar argument Erikson (1977), has tied this process of identification to ritual. Specifically, he notes that rituals serve an “associative function” for adolescents that helps them to develop intimacy (p. 110). As a formal ritual, the No Discount Ceremony was intended to help members identify their shared background and purpose. In this sense, it formally inducted members into the community.

As with the negotiation of meaning, identity in practice entails both ongoing participation and reification. When reification occurs, certain events gain a significance that makes them salient aspects of an individual’s identity. During the No Discount Ceremony, the testimonials served this function by giving participants an opportunity to reflect on the personal impact of this policy. However, these narratives served a second purpose. According to Wegner (1998), CoPs offer newcomers models for negotiating their trajectories. These “paradigmatic trajectories” create a field of possible pasts and futures based on both the composite stories and individual accounts of its members (p. 156). In this sense, imagination is a key mode of belonging to a community that significantly shapes identity. By hearing the transformation narratives of UB old-timers, its newcomers could imagine their own futures within the program.

In her work on identity construction among adult English Language Learners, Norton (2001) draws upon this concept of imagination to examine the often conflicting desires surrounding language acquisition. Challenging the construct of motivation as a stable, internal quality, Norton-Pierce (1995) proposes an alternate concept, investment, to explain how learning is connected to a desire for social and material capital. From this perspective, learners try to gain new knowledge or skills with the hope that they will see a return on this

investment. According to Norton (2001), learners' investment in classroom practices is often influenced by imagination since it allows them to envision a future filled with desirable social and material goods⁵. Because the transformation narratives offered at the No Discount Ceremony highlighted the social connections and competencies new members could develop, they held the potential to increase investment.

While individuals have some control over their participation, communities still negotiate who moves towards full membership and who skims the periphery. For this reason, individuals follow unique trajectories of participation within and between communities. These negotiations within the community are compounded as individuals have to reconcile their identity across a “nexus of multi-memberships” that may carry conflicting forms of participation (Wegner, 1998, p. 149). Through this movement within and between communities, individuals engage in an ongoing process of learning that becomes constitutive of their sense of self-hood.

Since UB and the high schools served similar purposes, students often compared their membership in these communities during the No Discount Ceremony. Significantly, many of them expressed a greater sense of belonging within the UB community than their high schools. In this sense, interpretations of experience during the No Discount Ceremony hinged upon participation in other communities. Because forms of participation contrasted in multiple ways across UB and the high schools, I discuss these differences more fully within

⁵ In a similar theoretical construct, Markus & Nurius (1986) have developed the concept of possible selves—the future selves individuals would like to become, could become, or fear becoming. Like paradigmatic trajectories and imagined communities, these possible selves unite past and future experiences and derive from both self-representations and social comparisons. Because these mental representations provide powerful incentives for future behavior, this concept helps to connect self-concept and motivation.

the next section. This comparison will provide the backdrop for analyzing the writerly identities the case study participants formed within and across these communities.

Contrasting Trajectories of Participation in High School and UB

Through its community practices, UB instilled the expectation that all students could pursue a college education regardless of their past academic performance. To help participants imagine their futures as college students, training materials encouraged staff to share their own postsecondary experiences and discuss its positive impact on their career. Former UB participants also frequently returned to the program to present their own educational success stories and inspire its current members. By providing models from similar backgrounds, the program created a paradigmatic trajectory that showed how members could overcome past or current obstacles to reach future educational goals.

Beyond these shared stories, UB supported students' college-bound trajectories by ensuring that every student had equal access to its college preparatory curriculum. In Senior Seminar, this curriculum allowed students to imagine their futures as college students by completing their college admissions essay and researching different colleges. Rather than varying levels of difficulty, UB capped course enrollment at sixteen students and provided each course with a tutor. These program elements were designed to give students the individualized attention they needed to succeed in classes with mixed ability levels. Emphasizing the importance of these components within Senior Seminar, the teacher observed:

I think that the students were much more wanting of my time and asking more questions and being more involved as opposed to when you're in a 28 kid classroom where some kids are just like, I don't want to be here. I don't want to participate. And they can do that, but there everyone was really actively participating, so it was actually a positive experience. It was actually more intimate and more I'm involved in what you're doing, and we're working together instead of sort of I'm here, you're there (personal communication, August 14, 2013).

By creating a more intimate classroom community, then, UB created opportunities for fuller forms of participation.

Training materials likewise emphasized this combination of high academic expectations and support as key components of its delivery model:

The tone and culture of the summer program is one that promotes trust, mutual respect, risk taking, and commitment to self improvement. [. . .] This combination of support and high expectations communicates our belief in each student's capacity to achieve. As students see evidence of progress and achievement, their motivation increases. Encouragement and individual attention are the catalysts for this progress (Staff Handbook).

Beyond the classroom, UB maintained this model by scheduling daily ninety-minute study sessions staffed by teachers and tutors. Academic progress was closely monitored, and students missing more than one assignment in a course could not participate in any extracurricular activities until the work was completed. Students who continued to fall behind attended a council meeting of administrators and fellow students to identify strategies for improvement.

In contrast to UB, tracking within both school districts structured different trajectories of participation that had become reified into institutional labels. At Savannah's school in Breckinridge, there were three levels—special education, standard, and enriched—and Riverview offered four. Riverview's Program of Studies emphasized that the levels "should be thought of as an indicator of the academic challenge expected to be met in a course, and never as monikers of student ability to learn." However, Ariel's English teacher still labeled the students in Level One (L1) as remedial; Level Two (L2) as average; Level Three (L3) as college bound, but still pretty average; and Level Four (L4) as advanced. Savannah's freshman English teacher likewise associated the levels with students' academic ability. While avoiding more explicit references to ability, Riverview's Program of Studies still depicted L1 and L2 students as remedial through its emphasis on "strengthening their

communication and thinking,” “discover[ing] new literacy and numeracy skills,” and “improving sound habits for learning.” In contrast, it described L3 & L4 students as “strong readers, writers and thinkers” who were “deeply invested in their learning” and capable of “higher-order thinking skills,” “independent and self-directed research,” and “problem-solving in multidisciplinary contexts.” Within both districts, then, course levels guided interpretations surrounding students’ abilities, motivation to learn, and future career paths.

Based on these interpretations, each course level offered different forms of participation in academic writing. For instance, Riverview’s Program of Studies emphasized inquiry and collaboration in L3 and L4, while lower level classes as focused more on skill development. Applying these descriptions to English courses within their school, Ariel’s Junior and Senior English teachers noted that L3 and L4 English required more writing and research. They also indicated that students who took higher level courses during their freshman and sophomore year had more opportunities to enroll in English electives as juniors and seniors. Savannah’s teacher characterized the enriched track as including more reading, writing, and canonical literary texts. The lower tracks focused on life skills, like filling out job applications. Taken together, these descriptions suggested that students in the upper tracks experienced a more academically-oriented curriculum with a greater emphasis on writing, collaboration, and higher-order thinking skills. In contrast the lower tracks focused on basic skills and vocational training.

While the teachers and participants in both districts agreed that students could choose their levels in each subject, this policy still marginalized certain members’ trajectories of participation. In April 2014, for instance, a civil rights investigation conducted by the U.S. Department of Education found that information barriers, placement tests, and the policy of failing students who dropped to a lower level midterm excluded ethnically and linguistically diverse students in Riverview from college preparatory courses. For instance, the report cited

that, “Despite the enrollment of 381 black students and 596 Latino students at the high schools, only 17 seats in AP classes went to black students and only nine seats in AP classes went to Latino students, out of the total of 434 seats in AP courses.” In many ways, then, micro-level influences on students’ literacy development reflected macro-level influences, such as broader racial inequalities. Unlike UB, then, the participants’ high schools created a very different set of paradigmatic trajectories for students at each of the levels.

Due to limited staffing and large class sizes, the Riverview and Breckenridge school districts were unable to offer students the same opportunities for Legitimate Peripheral Participation in writing. Savannah’s teacher noted that the difficult student population and challenges with the former administration caused many members of the English department to leave. Most of these teachers were never replaced. Likewise, Ariel’s junior English teacher reported that after failed contract negotiations and district layoffs, the English department went from nineteen to thirteen teachers. As a result, class sizes in both districts skyrocketed. At times, there were as many as 38 students in a class. All three of the high school English teachers I interviewed noted that large classes created behavior management issues and made it hard to give feedback on writing. Ariel’s senior English teacher also reported that this challenge caused her to assign less writing.

Negotiated Trajectories of Participation in Writing

According to Wegner (1998), “participation and reification cannot be considered in isolation: they come as a pair. They form a unity in their duality” (p.62). While institutional policies in the high schools and UB had reified prototypical trajectories of participation, the case study participants’ experienced them as an ongoing negotiation with profound implications for the types of literacy sponsorship they received. These negotiations reflected a cyclical pattern of institutional policies, teacher expectations, student investment, peer dynamics, and writerly identities. In the high schools, tracking policies constructed static

categories of ability that did not fit student's individual needs or facilitate academic advancement. For this reason, the participants either experienced writing instruction that was too easy or found that large classes and limited scaffolding prevented them from succeeding with more rigorous coursework. As a result, students' investment in learning diminished, creating peer dynamics that constrained writing instruction. UB offered high expectations and social supports that helped the participants see themselves as better writers; however, these writerly identities were often disrupted when they re-entered high school. Since individuals follow unique trajectories, I will discuss each student briefly while also pointing to overlaps in their experience.

Jared: Temporary Disruptions

Up until his senior year, Jared had followed his teachers' and counselors' recommendations to enroll in L2 English courses, where his participation in academic writing was marginalized. In many ways Jared's experiences corroborated the numerous studies that have found rote literacy curriculum, burnt out teachers, and disinterested peers in low level classes (Fu, 1995; Harklau, 1994; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2010; Rose, 1989). For instance, he compared his junior year English class to listening to sermons in church, explaining that the teacher primarily read and summarized course materials in class lectures. Commenting on the minimal amounts of writing in that class, he reflected, "I know not writing papers is not going to help my writing. I'm a little lazy, so it's kind of nice, but it's not really going to help my writing for college" (personal communication, June 28, 2013). As indicated by this statement, Jared was somewhat ambivalent about writing. He saw writing as a key part of his college preparation. At the same time, he still needed support and encouragement from teachers to increase his investment.

This relationship between teacher expectations and student motivation also shaped the peer dynamics surrounding his writing. For instance, in comparing high school and UB English classes, he saw students' investment as the primary difference:

My English classes at UB are much better than high school. I guess it's the students, the attitude in the class. The people in UB are pretty much ready to work and help people work, and my school's like, they can't wait until they get out, until the bell rings and they go somewhere else. (Jared, personal communication, August 23, 2013)

Because Jared frequently used conversation as a tool for invention, having classmates who were "ready to work and help people work" supported his writing. In Senior Seminar, for instance, Jared asked his peers for help with his writing until he became comfortable with the teacher. In contrast, he indicated that his friends in high school would not care about his writing. He tied these differences in students' attitudes to his teachers: "If the teacher's in a bad mood, everyone's in a bad mood. If the teacher's in a good mood, and all of the students are in a good mood to work, I think the classroom will be great" (personal communication, August 23, 2013). However, he also indicated that unmotivated students at his school caused teachers to give up. In terms of literacy sponsorship, then, UB peers enabled his development as a writer, and high school peers suppressed it.

The more immediate interactions surrounding Jared's writing were often influenced by institutional policies. For instance, when asked why he thought students had better attitudes at UB, Jared offered this response:

In UB, highest levels, lowest levels, it's like a mix. I guess they choose people with good attitudes 'cause they know that in the future they're going to change to become a better person, a better student, like me. My freshman year, I was a really bad student; I didn't care. I was just like the kids in my school. Then I went to UB. (personal communication, August 24, 2013)

This statement suggests that the mixed-ability grouping and high expectations in UB increased Jared's investment by helping him imagine himself as a better student. In contrast, he acknowledged that the tracking system at his school may have contributed to students'

limited investment. During final interviews, I shared some of the findings from U.S. Department of Education's civil rights investigation. Reflecting on the causes of this achievement gap, Jared speculated, "I think it is the students and the school. Without one you cannot have the other. If you need two batteries for your cell phone and you have one, you still need another" (personal communication, June 24, 2014). In other words, Jared believed that the both the students' disengagement and the school's low expectation prevented minorities from enrolling in L3 and L4 classes. While UB tried to transform students' trajectories, then, the high schools seemed to maintain them.

To some extent, UB interrupted Jared's trajectory of participation with academic writing, and in a process he compared to "cranking the gears," he found that his confidence and motivation increased a little more each summer (personal communication, July 2, 2013). This change in Jared's writerly identity culminated in the decision to enroll in L3 English and science courses during his senior year. While he had previously avoided courses requiring extensive writing, Jared reported that having his UB English teachers seek him out to offer extra help during independent study sessions showed him his potential. Within these L3 classes, Jared encountered higher expectations among his teachers and more motivated peers. However, he struggled to meet these new literacy demands due to his past trajectories and limited opportunities for LPP. Up until his senior year, Jared had only read one book: *The Outsiders*. Therefore, when asked to read *Cold Mountain* and write a research paper on it, he described the task as "above his level," despite his classmates attempts to "dumb it down" for him (personal communication, December 4, 2013). Such comments seemed to reflect Jared's belief that he did not really fit within this L3 class. Unlike Senior Seminar, Jared's College Composition teacher expected him to seek her out after school because there were too many students for her to offer individualized assistance during class. Intimidated by the teacher, he did not take this initiative. Getting a "C," in College Composition, he told me that his

decision to push himself to take College Composition had backfired. In some ways, then, his trajectory of participation and writerly identity were temporarily interrupted rather than permanently transformed by UB.

Marie & Savannah: Marginalized Trajectories in the Higher Tracks

In many ways, Marie followed the opposite trajectory of participation as Jared. Based on her standardized test scores, she was encouraged to take L4 English classes during her freshman and sophomore year. However, attending the UB program prevented her from completing the extra summer reading assignments this course required. Consequently, Marie had to drop down to a L3 course. Having to choose between these options, she reported that UB was more valuable because she became familiar with a college campus and wrote extensively in all of the classes. Marie also had limited access to the rigorous curriculum in the L4 class. For instance, she offered this comparison between her classes at UB and L4 English: “English 4 is faster. I can’t move fast paced because then I forget a lot of things, and you do a lot more stuff on your own” (personal communication December 5, 2014). Unlike her experience in UB, Marie frequently felt left behind in her L4 English class due to the fast pace and the expectation that students be independent learners. In many ways, this description resonated with other accounts of linguistic minority students in honors courses. Enright (2013), for instance, found that the bilingual honors students in her study had difficulty accessing the curriculum due to the pacing of instruction and limited explanation. For this reason, she has argued that these students are “little more than window shoppers in honors classes: they can observe and admire the more advance content learning and writing of their peers, but it is not theirs to develop and display if they are not given the appropriate tools and taught how to use them” (p.40). In this sense, Marie’s trajectory of participation was already limited despite her placement in L4 courses.

However, dropping down a level, she seemed to face lowered expectations and less invested peers. For instance, Marie offered this description of the instruction she typically received in her senior English class:

My teacher, let's say we're reading a book, then she gives us whole chapters with questions in the back, which the answers are on-line, and she expects the kids to read the chapter, "Guys, we'll go over it tomorrow" [laughter]. She thinks somebody is going to read it? Come to school, she's like since no one read it, I'll give you an extra day (focus group, May 13, 2014)

Unlike the fast-paced instruction her L4 class, Marie found the instruction in L3 rote and repetitive. This problem seemed to reflect both student-teacher interactions and peer dynamics. The teacher assigned students rote literacy task, and seeing no purpose behind the assignment, students engaged in a form of non-participation. Brandt (2001) has pointed out that sponsors of literacy gain some benefit from their role, and in this case, students' disengagement was rewarded by extensions on the assignment. Marie reported that this pattern became worse when her teacher went on maternity leave during the spring semester, and students in the class found that they could get the long-term substitute to discuss the upcoming prom instead of following the lesson.

Furthermore, while the pacing and curriculum were less demanding, Marie still did not receive opportunities for LPP in L3 courses due to large class sizes. For instance, she told me that she never had an opportunity to get peer feedback in her high school courses. Even teacher feedback was limited, and she complained, "My teachers just put 100%; they don't even look. I have a lot of grammar problems, so I would like for them to read it, but they can't read it" (focus group, May 13, 2014). While the curriculum, pace, and motivation was higher in upper-level course, this limited amount of support seemed to be a consistent feature across the tracks.

According to Savannah, up until her senior year, the decision to enroll in enriched courses seemed automatic: "Most people take enriched if you're average, I guess, and I just

knew that I can do it” (personal communication, January 28, 2014). Despite being enrolled in the college preparatory track, it is significant here that Savannah describe the students in this course as “average” since this perspective seemed to both refract and reflect her experiences in these courses. Like Jared and Marie, Savannah indicated that peer dynamics in her classes got teachers off-topic, distracted her from working, and limited opportunities for writing. For instance, her junior year English class had started a research paper on the *Scarlett Letter* but never finished it because classmates convinced the teacher that it was too hard and there was not enough time. This trend continued into senior year when her Philosophy teacher shut down the class’s online discussion forum because no one was participating. Explaining that she did not like talking during class, Savannah found that this forum helped her interact in discussions and was disappointed it did not work.

Like Jared, Savannah frequently highlighted the differences in students’ investment in writing practices at UB and her high school. For instance, she believed that peer feedback was a more common feature in her UB classes than high school because of the student populations:

The people who are in Upward Bound are the ones who care about their education; they want to do something with their lives pretty much because of Upward Bound, and then there are so many more people in high school compared to 100 in Upward Bound and 1200 in high school. There's only probably 400 that care about their education, so most people don't want to do things like that. They just want to have a passing grade.

Here, Savannah repeated a key theme that emerged across the participants and their teachers responses: large class and school sizes constrained writing instruction. However, she also indicated that the reciprocal influences between teacher’s and student’s investment exacerbated these problems. For instance, when asked why the students in her school were unmotivated, she mused, “Maybe it's like a teeter totter thing, like the kids’ attitudes, the teacher’s motivation, it all like balances” (personal communication, March 4, 2014). As with

Jared's cell phone battery metaphor, Savannah saw the connection between teacher and student investment and noted that these dynamics were more positive in UB.

Savannah's experiences also confirmed that being in the lower tracks further constricted writing instruction. During her senior year, Savannah had to drop to a standard level online English course to accommodate the full time job she took to help support her family. She was initially optimistic, explaining, "I know in college prep, they would just expect you to know how to write, and I think that I'll be able to write better with the standard online class because there is not so much pressure on me to write it really well" (personal communication, January 28, 2014). Again, like Marie, Savannah associated higher tracks with limited scaffolding. Although Savannah believed the standard course could help her writing, it had the opposite effect. Once she actually started the course, she complained, "It's boring. It's not interactive I guess. Just me sitting on the computer reading stuff, clicking buttons (personal communication, March 4, 2014). The first five lessons had been grammar drills, but during our meeting, she had started an online discussion on student-authored web publications. She was excited to be able to read other people's opinions and post her own and, given the topic of this post, hoped that more interactive activities were in store. This notion of publishing online seemed to be more of an abstract proposition than a foundation for the rest of the course, however, and interactive assignments were the exception rather than the norm. Discussions only occurred once per unit, five times during the course, and even though there was an exercise on peer review, the syllabus indicated that students would only be using these skills to review their own work or a model text instead of an actual peer's writing. Overall, then, the course seemed to resemble an online packet of worksheets more than the blogs or discussion forum she enjoyed.

Ariel and Gabrielle: From Deep Participation to Passing and Procedural Display

Throughout these descriptions of their high school classes, the participants often portrayed teachers and students' superficially engaged learning and teaching. In his application of the CoP framework, Prior (1998) has identified three general modes of engagement in academic writing: passing, procedural display, and deep participation. He has characterized passing with meeting institutional requirements (e.g. grades, credits, or certifications) and procedural display as going through the motions of "doing a lesson" (p. 101). In contrast, deep participation enables movement towards more mature forms of membership within the community. Instead of moving towards these more mature forms of membership, Ariel and Gabrielle gravitated away from deep participation towards passing and procedural displays.

I had the opportunity to witness this shift most directly with Ariel. When we first met, she noted that she disliked writing and rarely did so voluntarily. For this reason, I was often surprised by her engagement with writing assignments in UB. For instance, during a peer writing workshop on their college admissions essays, she was so completely immersed in editing her partner's paper that she continued working even after the teacher announced a five-minute break. When the teacher asked her why she was not on break, Ariel stated that she was "in the mode" and wanted to continue working (fieldnotes July 11, 2014). When I later asked her what it meant to be "in the mode," she offered this response: "I don't want to stop. I don't get distracted. Like, I usually get distracted really easily but when I'm in the mode all my distractions are put away" (personal communication, July, 14 2013). She went on to explain that this intense focus was often accompanied by a sense of accomplishment. While Ariel frequently reported losing track of time while working on art projects, this was the only time she had a similar experience with writing.

In many ways, Ariel's descriptions of "being in the mode" resembled Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) concept of flow, which he has defined as being "the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter" (p. 28). In order for flow to occur, individuals must experience competence, challenge, clear feedback and immediacy. Applying this theory to literacy, Smith and Wilhelm (2002) have speculated that adolescent males become disengaged with school reading because they don't experience flow. Like the students in this study, Ariel experienced flow in her writing process when she encountered high expectations and clear feedback. However, imagination, or the opportunity to envision herself achieving future goals, seemed more important than immediacy in fostering this deeper form of engagement.

For instance, Ariel noted that she spent more time revising and editing her college admissions essay than she would with a typical writing assignment because she considered it more important. She displayed a similar level of investment in the second essay, a compare contrast research paper on two different colleges. During this assignment, Ariel went beyond the required internet research to actually contacting admissions counselors for additional information. While highlighting her dislike of research papers, she found this assignment useful "because if I didn't have to do that then I probably wouldn't have even looked at any colleges yet like into detail. Now I know where I definitely want to go and what majors they have and programs and how far it is away from [Riverview]" (personal communication, July 11, 2014). These assignments increased Ariel's investment by allowing her to imagine herself in college and facilitating these future plans.

As the school year began, these deep forms of participation often moved towards passing and procedural display. According to Ariel, this shift emerged from the differing levels of challenge, support, and feedback she received in each community. For instance, she noted, "We did a lot of for senior seminar. Writing's kind of hard. I didn't improve in my

writing I would guess in a long time, and like Upward Bound helped me improve it a little bit, but now I feel like I'm stuck on the same level (personal communication, November 11, 2013). She went on to explain, "I think Upward Bound helped me grow 'cause Jennifer helped me, like change some stuff to make it better and [the tutor] did. And the essay we wrote, the college compare one. That was hard. I think that was the hardest piece I wrote during the summer, but that helped me a lot too with my writing (November 11, 2013). In other words, receiving the support she needed to complete challenging assignments increased Ariel's sense of competency.

In contrast, she felt that her writing ability had plateaued due to limited feedback and repetitive instruction in her high school English class, Creative Writing. Though conferences in this class were frequent, Ariel did not find them useful and complained that the teacher skimmed over her paper and offered vague comments. At times, she attributed these problems to the size of the class. However, she also frequently described her teacher as lazy. In this sense, institutional factors also shaped her impressions the teacher's investment.

As the opportunities for legitimate peripheral participation shifted, so did Ariel's investment. When I observed her in Creative Writing, she texted friends on her phone instead of writing the journal entry her teacher had assigned (fieldnotes, November 24, 2014). Additionally, her revisions on the writing assignments in this class were minimal and often perfunctory. For instance, in implementing teacher feedback in a fairytale she had titled "Somnus Fila" and patterned after the Prince and the Pauper, Ariel made revisions that she didn't agree with or understand. The teacher had recommended that she make the story more focused, and Ariel complied even though she believed her original was better. Rewriting this assignment an hour before it was due, she was amazed by the "A" she received and saw this grade as further proof that her teacher didn't read her writing. During both this and many other assignments, the writing process became a procedural display as Ariel merely went

through the motions of revising her writing. Likewise, in a brief questionnaire I gave the students, Ariel indicated that her only purpose for writing was to earn a high grade. Such responses reflected a primary focus on passing rather than the desire for growth and improvement that would characterize deep participation.

Ultimately, her limited investment led to a trajectory of non-participation. During Spring Semester, she dropped English entirely, explaining that she already had enough credits and found it boring. Unfortunately, she rarely wrote outside of English and only produced one paper during spring semester, a two page marketing analysis for a L4 economics course. While finding this assignment more engaging, Ariel still complained that the teacher offered limited direction or feedback. Like Marie and Savannah, then, Ariel's trajectory of participation was marginalized by the limited support available within college preparatory courses. However, her diminished investment also influenced this trajectory.

This trajectory from deep participation towards passing and procedural display seemed to be a reoccurring pattern that gradually reduced her investment in UB. During her senior year, she started to question UB's value and decided not to apply to the summer bridge program after her senior year. Explaining this choice, she noted, "I don't feel the same about [UB]; I thought that was gonna help me like do better in school, but I'm the same. I think it's 'cause like... my first year I was really motivated and stuff...and then as the school year went on, I was like 'Oh, I don't have that help anymore; there's no point to trying'" (personal communication, December 19, 2013). Much like Jared, then, UB represented a temporary disruption rather than a permanent transformation in her trajectory. Unlike him, however, this inconsistency would have a more negative effect on her investment in both communities.

In some ways, Gabrielle's perspective on the writing instruction she received in high school complicated these other descriptions. During her freshman year, Gabrielle was enrolled in L2 courses but quickly moved up to L3s based on the encouragement of her

teachers. Unlike the rest of the case study participants, Gabrielle believed she received more support, clearer feedback, and higher expectations in her L2 ESL course than the mainstream L3 English class she took as a junior:

I feel that ELL is harder than Level 3. ELL classes want you to make sure that you're doing the right thing. I was in ELL and I was in Level 3 English. I got an A in my English class and I got a C + in my ELL class. She wanted us to write a perfect paper. She would check for grammar; she would check for everything, if we didn't have that thesis right. That kind of prepared me.
(personal communication, June 19, 2014)

Although this was the lowest grade Gabrielle had ever received, she appreciated these demands, believing they contributed to her proficiency in written English. Based on this response, Gabrielle seemed more concerned with learning to write than passing or procedural displays.

At times, however, writing in this ESL course could also be overly scaffolded, which seemed to diminish Gabrielle's engagement. For instance, a timed essay test required Gabrielle to use the teacher's thesis for a five paragraph theme on *The Crucible*. Wishing she could have written her own thesis, Gabrielle noted that it was more difficult to write a paper based on someone else's interpretations. The teacher also required the students to follow a rather lockstep writing process. In preparation for this timed writing, students completed a brainstorm and outline. Already knowing, what she wanted to write about, Gabrielle constructed the outline first and then completed the brainstorm simply to please the teacher. In this case, a concern with passing and procedural display disrupted a deeper engagement with the writing process.

To some extent, writing instruction in UB offered Gabrielle the same level of support as her ESL class but with greater flexibility. For instance, she noted that due to the small size of the UB community, everyone knew the requirements for the essays in Senior Seminar. For this reason, she found it easier to seek feedback from multiple people, such as tutors and

friends. However, due to the large number of classes at her high school, it was difficult to get additional help from friends and other teachers because they did not always understand the requirements of the assignment. Additionally, she reported that her UB teachers gave her greater freedom over what to write. She felt that high school teachers typically focused on her grammar and ability to address an assigned topic. However, at UB she indicated, “I feel that Jennifer expected us to write for the personal essay what we wanted. She expected us to write about ourselves and to get a voice out of us” (personal communication, August 20, 2013). Gabrielle’s ESL classes may have improved her proficiency through Legitimate Peripheral Participation, but did not allow her to gradually assume greater independence. Due to the small size of the community and availability of material resources, UB provided a deeper form of participation that led towards greater independence.

In contrast to the support Gabrielle experience in ESL and UB, her mainstream high school courses were less consistent: “Mainstream classes, they have a lot of students. They don't really care. Some teachers do care, others don't. It would depend (personal communication, June 19, 2014). Gabrielle’s senior year English classes reflected this inconsistency. For instance, during the first semester, she often spoke animatedly about the oral poetry contest and class debates in her English class. While her teacher rarely offered written feedback on these assignments, Gabrielle often sought out extra help after school. She also had positive experiences collaborating with peers on a debate over designer babies, indicating that working as a team made the assignment more fun and improved her performance.

During the Creative Writing course she took second semester, however, these social supports dwindled. Because her teacher had been hospitalized, Gabrielle had a long term substitute and did not receive any feedback on her work. The situation did not improve once the teacher returned, and Gabrielle complained,

I have English class but we don't really go over the stuff; she's just like, write, write something, but we don't really go over the requirement stuff. I'm not learning anything from that. She doesn't give us feedback most of the time, so it's like, I don't know what you expect from me for the next paper, so I am just going to keep giving you what I've got. (focus group, May 13, 2014)

Much like Ariel, Gabrielle felt that her writing development hit a plateau, and her investment likewise diminished. On her questionnaire, she too indicated that she often wrote what she thought the teacher wanted to hear instead of what she wanted to say. She also reported that her main purpose for writing was to complete the assignment and get a good grade. Like Ariel, then, Gabrielle gravitated towards passing and procedural display when she received minimal support and feedback in Creative Writing.

In many ways, Marie, Ariel, and Gabrielle's frustration with the feedback they received in their high school classes corroborates findings from other studies of immigrant writers. Ferris (1999), for instance, has argued that immigrant students respond differently to teacher feedback than international students due to their educational backgrounds, personal histories, and forms of language acquisition. Many studies have noted that international students may not value or utilize teacher feedback since they have primarily used writing to practice vocabulary or grammar. On the other hand, Ferris has pointed out that immigrant students are more familiar with receiving feedback from their teachers and primarily use writing to achieve academic or instrumental objectives. For this reason, studies have shown that the both value and often successfully utilize teacher feedback. Despite these positive outcomes, immigrant students may be less familiar with grammatical terms or metalanguage. They also have a difficult time addressing global comments focused on the logic of their writing without follow up support. The broader findings can potentially explain why the participants in my study were so disappointed by the limited feedback they received and struggled to implement suggestions that required them to shift the focus of their writing without additional guidance.

In addition to receiving limited response from teachers, the feedback she received from peers was also minimal. Like Savannah, Gabrielle complained that other students in her class were too loud and disruptive for her to work. She likewise indicated that peer conferencing was ineffective in this setting. Although the teacher often arranged peer workshops, she rarely received detailed feedback: “They're always, this is good. I know this is not good, so if you give me like how to fix it . . . they don't give me good feedback” (personal communication, February 16, 2014). From this description, her peers seemed to be going through the motions of conferencing rather than engaging with each others’ texts. Gabrielle found this particularly frustrating because most of them were native-English speakers, and she believed they could support her English acquisition.

In some ways, this experience resonated with Toohey’s (1998) longitudinal ethnographic research, which followed a group of multilingual children from kindergarten to third grade. Employing the CoP framework, this study revealed that the classroom layout and policies prevented the multilingual students from interacting with English-proficient peers (old-timers in English). As with the students in Toohey’s study, Gabrielle’s interactions with old-timers in English was restricted. However, instead of the course policies and classroom layout, the emphasis on passing and procedural displays contributed to her marginalization.

Although every individual follows a unique trajectory of participation (Wegner, 1998), it is useful to point out the intersections between these cases. These participants regularly expressed that they encountered higher expectations and more support from teachers, peers, and tutors in UB. This type of participation in academic writing temporarily increased their sense of competence and investment. However, these positive outcomes diminished once they returned to their overcrowded, tracked high schools where they faced harried teachers, low expectations, limited feedback, and disinterested peers. With the exception of Gabrielle’s L2 ESL course, these problems became worse as students moved

down the tracks. However, even within the higher tracks, students did not receive the support they needed to make the curriculum accessible. Tracking, then, proved to be a static rather than dynamic system since students did not receive the scaffolding required for academic advancement. While these factors had a significant effect on the participants' academic writing, experiences beyond the classroom were equally pervasive. Within this next section, I connect these academic and non-academic influences as students moved between UB and high school communities.

Reconciling Identities across a Nexus of Multimemberships

If students are fearful of being humiliated, either by a teacher or fellow students, they will not offer opinions or take risks, will not engage in discussion, and will do their best to be invisible. However, if students are not fearful, are instead relaxed, aware, and interested, they will begin to find their voices. ("No Discount Policy in the Classroom," UB Staff Manual).

Wegner (1998) has argued that individuals define themselves in terms of their participation and non-participation within CoPs. However, the decision over whether or not to participate in a community often depends on two primary factors:

- (1). Identification, the sense of being similar to or different from other members.
- (2). Negotiation, the ability to contribute meanings within a community.

These processes of identification and negotiation are often compounded by individuals' membership within different communities. Because different communities may have conflicting forms of participation, individuals must reconcile these competing identities to gain a sense of belonging. Among the participants in this study, conflicts between their experience in high school and UB often left them struggling to reconcile their identity. Such challenges affected their identification with peers and ability to negotiate meanings within the community. These non-academic influences would have a significant impact on their writerly identities.

Institutional and meritocratic discourses created divisions among students within and beyond their high school classrooms. As a result, there was a clear ranking system and minimal opportunities for diverse groups to negotiate meanings or associate with each other. In many ways, the larger body of research on tracking has revealed similar social dynamics. For instance, both Oakes (2005) and Davidson (1996) found that scheduling constraints prevented interactions among students from different tracks. They also noted that the institutional labels themselves influenced social perceptions among peers. At times, the participants in my study acknowledged that institutional factors shaped student achievement at their school. However, they also frequently attached negative labels to the diverse student population in the lower levels. For instance, discussing disparities in course enrollment at his school, Jared stated, “I know a lot of minorities really don't want to learn. Some people just use the ESL thing as a way to pass a test” (personal communication, June 24, 2014). Pointing to their own ability to overcome language barriers, Ariel and Gabrielle likewise characterized the students in the lower tracks as lazy. Much like the Program of Studies, then, the participants tied course placement to motivation.

When coupled with their own educational trajectories, these judgments complicated the participants’ identifications with high school peers. Both Jared and Savannah tried to distance themselves from classmates in the lower tracks. Jared, for instance, frequently described how he had transformed himself to be different from the other students in his L2 classes. Similarly, when Savannah enrolled in the standard-level English course, she too was quick to disassociate herself from classmates: “I know the other students in my class, but I am not friends with them. They are not my group of friends; they are the people who don't appreciate their education because I didn't really want to take Standard English [the lower level English course], but it was the only option for me” (personal communication, March 4, 2014). By highlighting her own extenuating circumstances, Savannah could avoid

categorizing herself with negatively labeled students. In contrast, Gabrielle's identifications with peers in low level classes remained more complicated. Despite the negative labels she attached to these students, Gabrielle continued to associate with this group by requesting to be placed back in L2 ESL after testing out of the program. Explaining this decision, she stated, "It's like I know we're kind of all equals. I feel like that's my home" (personal communication, April 30, 2014). In this sense, positive experience in ESL courses and a sense of similarity trumped institutional labels.

In many ways, these identifications with classmates were connected to factions beyond the classroom. For instance, when I asked Ariel how she felt about being in the predominantly white L3 classes, she offered this response:

I feel normal. I consider myself as white because I act more like a white person than I do an Asian person. If you see other kids at my school, the Asian kids usually hangout with the Asian kids, the Spanish kids with the Spanish kids, the white kids with the white kids and whatnot. I find myself hanging out more with the white kids than the Asian kids. (personal communication, June 17, 2014)

As indicated here, students at Ariel's school were divided by race, and group affiliation altered her own racial identity. She went on to explain that, while she had previously associated with other Vietnamese peers from church, this group shifted once they started leaving for college and she began making friends with white students in her class, whom she characterized as the "popular kids." In many ways, then, Ariel's identifications reflected her desire to associate herself with members of the high school community who held academically and socially prestigious positions.

The other participants likewise highlighted the saliency of social cliques within their school. However, they often offered competing causes for and effects of these factions. At times, even the same participant offered multiple accounts. Jared for instance, indicated that

students formed cliques based on different interests. However, he also suggested they might have been tied to institutional policies, observing that the ESL students in his school all sat together at lunch because they had the same schedule. Gabrielle reported more positive experiences: “At my school, yes, there’s the popular kids, there’s the Spanish kid group; there’s the black. But I feel like, me, I socialize with everyone” (personal communication, June 19, 2014). However, she also complained that student body officers at her school were racist and more likely to involve white students more in pep rallies and other school events. In other words, there seemed to be limitations to these possibilities for integration. While Savannah did not highlight the effects of race and linguistic background, she believed that the size of her school created cliques by preventing different groups of students from interacting. Despite these contrasting accounts, the impacts of race, language background, and institutional structure were re-emerging themes. Along with the broader social discourses surrounding race, class, and achievement, institutional policies, such as tracking, reinforced the negative judgments that the No Discount policy tried to eradicate.

In contrast to the high schools, UB policies emphasized integration both inside and outside the classroom. In addition to the No Discount Policy and Ceremony, UB created an inclusive community by assigning students to smaller groups that engaged in communication exercises and team building activities. Group construction was centered on introducing students to divergent viewpoints:

We design the groups so that they are diverse as possible. All the high schools we serve are represented, and students from the same school are often in different grades and programs. Racial, ethnic, and gender diversity are all part of the mix. These groups create a sense of comfort *along with* a sense of challenge. We want them to have to experience the clashing of viewpoints as they face challenges in their group (UB Staff Manual)

In other words, the primary purpose behind these groups was to provide students with an opportunity to negotiate meanings. According to the UB Staff Manual, the No Discount

Policy was largely an attempt to prevent “unhealthy disagreements” that might emerge from these negotiations. Beyond these individual groups, class enrollment, table arrangements at meals, and roommate assignments were structured to encourage students to interact with peers across the program. In these ways, UB gave students opportunities for negotiating and building positive identifications with peers from different backgrounds.

However, in practice, the process of reconciliation affected these possibilities for identification and negotiation. Two of the participants, Jared and Savannah, viewed UB as a sort of liminal space, where they could explore new affiliations and identities. This perspective supported their associations with UB peers, facilitated their ability to negotiate meanings, and gave them a sense of authenticity that supported their writing. However, this liminality sometimes made it difficult to transfer their writerly identities to high school. Marie, Gabrielle, and Ariel found it more difficult to reconcile identities. Expecting identities and affiliations to carry over between these communities, they found social interactions within UB inauthentic. This sense of inauthenticity could limit their trust and social supports for writing within UB.

Jared and Savannah: “If They Can Be Themselves, Maybe I Can Be Myself Too”

Among the participants, Jared and Savannah seemed to experience the greatest sense of belonging and authenticity at UB. For instance, on his literacy resource map, Jared identified UB as one of the items that had the most positive impact on his writing, explaining,

Upward Bound unleashed the best side of me that I didn't see before. I was shy then not shy, I was a really bad writer that had potential, and now I'm a decent writer. I guess when I used to write papers I was scared. I always wanted to fit in with my friends, but now I just want to be myself. I guess it's like the “No D” policy and stuff like that. Like how I saw one of my friends saying, “Hi” to everyone, being really friendly. I don't know; I guess people like that influence me, like saying if they can be themselves, maybe I can be myself too. (personal communication, October 24, 2013).

In other words, social relationships beyond the classroom influenced academic behaviors in both his high school and UB. Specifically, Jared expressed concern that students within his high school classes would make fun of what he wrote or the amount of time it took him to complete a paper. In contrast, UB provided an opportunity to explore new identities and affiliations. As a result, he was comfortable sharing his writing with peers, reporting, “I didn’t really care what people thought. I just wanted to express my idea, and I know people will help me make it better (personal communication, July 2, 2013). In this sense, the No Discount policy fostered positive identifications with peers that enabled Jared’s writing.

To some extent, he was able to reconcile this writerly identity across UB and his high school. Struggling to come up with topics for a research paper on the novel *Cold Mountain* in College Composition, he felt comfortable enough to ask his classmates for suggestions. Similarly, in Mythology, he collaborated with peers to plan and deliver a presentation on Greek heroes and expressed that he did not have the confidence to do this before UB. At other times, reconciliation became more difficult due to divisions among peers within his high school. Though sometimes willing to get feedback from high school peers, he still did not trust them as much as friends from UB. Revising his college admissions essay during the school year, he continued turning to UB peers for guidance. He explained, “Mostly I asked people from UB because I trust them more than regular persons from high school. They are in the same playing field as me, go into a program, changing yourself, and then going to college” (personal communication, December 4, 2013). Rarely writing in his previous L2 science classes, Jared found the lab reports in his senior L3 classes difficult. Despite these challenges, he felt too uncomfortable talking to his teacher in front of classmates or interacting with his lab partner to ask for help, explaining “‘cause some people I don’t talk to at all only because it’s high school” (personal communication, October 24, 2014). In many

ways, then, Jared was unable to build the same positive identifications with peers in high school that he had in UB.

Like Jared, Savannah believed that UB policies and positive identifications with UB peers unleashed her potential as a writer. When asked to compare her writing process for a high school and UB assignment, she noted:

Savannah: I'm a much better writer at UB. I think it's a lot easier to share with peers there 'cause they're all . . . everyone's nice, I guess; they're going to read it, and they're going to give you their opinion in the nicest way, and they don't mean it in a harmful way.

Shauna: And you feel that people are nicer here than they would be at high school?

Savannah: Yeah.

Shauna: Why do you think that is?

Savannah: The No Discount Policy. Then again, I feel that UB would still be the way it is even if we didn't have that policy, people would still get along cause just the environment.

Shauna: How would you describe the environment?

Savannah: Welcoming.

Shauna: Why do you think it's able to be more welcoming than high school?

Savannah: Because we're all family and we've been here for a couple years, and everyone gets close, and we have groups, and it's not like we go to all these different classes with all these different people, and it's a smaller community. (personal communication, July 7, 2014)

As suggested by this statement, the environment at UB supported Savannah's positive identifications with peers, whom she considered "family. However, she struggled to locate the cause of these positive identifications. To some extent, Savannah attributed them to the No Discount Policy. However, she attached greater importance to opportunities for sustained interactions and intimacy within the community.

Savannah seemed to find it even more difficult than Jared to reconcile these peer interactions with those she experienced in high school. For instance, Savannah expressed discomfort with classmates in her online English course and was relieved to interact with them indirectly:

Shauna: So what is it like interacting with [your classmates] online versus in person? Do you like that better or worse?

Savannah: Yeah, because I can say whatever I want, and they won't hurt me or yell at me.

Shauna: And you feel like that is a possibility in your class?

Savannah: There is more judgment. If you are face-to-face, then you can be hurt. (personal communication, March 4, 2014)

Some of this distrust seemed to emerge from the negative labels attached to peers in standard level courses. However, even in her higher level courses, Savannah complained that other students had either ridiculed her or acted disinterested when she shared her writing. She found these interactions so threatening that she refused to give a presentation in her high school Senior Exiting class about the colleges she wanted to attend. Yet, she had no problem giving a similar presentation in Senior Seminar at UB. Like Jared, these social dynamics altered Savannah's writerly identity, and she went from being confident to fearful about sharing her work.

Gabrielle & Marie: "Are You Fakin' It?"

Gabrielle and Marie's had more mixed responses to UB's policies and environment. Due to challenges reconciling memberships between UB and the high schools, both sometimes questioned the authenticity surrounding peer interactions within the program. This lack of authenticity, in turn, made them somewhat suspicious of their peers' response to writing. In discussing the effect the No Discount Policy had on her writing, for instance, Gabrielle noted several benefits:

In my senior seminar class, I can say anything, even something wrong for me to say. If I have a question I can just be like, "I don't understand this; I don't understand this word." They are not going to judge me or you are like stupid or this or that. They're going to be, "Oh, right here, this is what it means," you know, or like, "Let's look at the introduction together, or that's not the word." We're all going to do it together as a group; it's not like they're picking me apart or they're picking whoever it is apart.

To Gabrielle, a key advantage to the No Discount Policy was that it gave her permission to take risks, knowing that she would be supported and not ridiculed for making mistakes.

However, she found it equally important to be in an environment where other classmates were not being put down. For instance, she noted that high school peers never made fun of her for struggling to pronounce words or read out loud in English. However, she had watched other students being ridiculed, which compromised her own sense of trust.

Despite the benefits Gabrielle attributed to the No Discount policy, the process of reconciliation attenuated its effects. Because peers from her high school also attended UB, incongruities in their behavior could transfer this sense of distrust. For instance, before starting the summer program, Gabrielle witnessed a female student bully a peer with special needs at her high school. Later encountering this bully in UB, she was certain that this girl's efforts to adhere to the No Discount Policy were "fake" and indicated that "at high school she was being her real self" (personal communication, June 19, 2014). Faced with competing forms of membership, Gabrielle saw the identities within the high schools as being more real or authentic. For this reason, she sometimes worried that if she shared too much within UB, she could be ridiculed upon returning to high school.

Marie often issued similar concerns regarding authenticity. For instance, her recollections of the first day of the program reflected these same incongruities:

Like everyone was nice, it was kind of shocking because at school everyone just walked by you, and then that's when I met Sophan [a friend from UB]. She came over and she's like, "We're so excited that . . .," and I'm like, "Hey, are you fakin.'" because people were too excited for no reason; I don't understand why, so I'm like, "Are you faking it," and she's like, "No, you've got to be happy here, there's no D." I'm like, "No discount." She's like, "Yeah, the policy, you have to be nice to everyone, and it works here." So I'm like, "Fine, I'll just get along with everyone until the summer's ending." (personal communication, February 27, 2014)

It is significant here that both Marie and her friend saw the No Discount Policy as something temporary that could not carry over into their high school experience. In this sense, Marie shared Savannah and Jared's sense of liminality surrounding UB. Unlike them, her

acceptance of these new possibilities seemed more grudging, as indicated by the reluctance she expressed towards the end of this statement.

This same ambivalence and fear that peers might be “fakin’ it” colored Marie’s perceptions of how the No Discount Policy affected her writing:

I think that the No Discount policy is good, but then sometimes it’s bad because you want people to tell you their honest feeling about your writing. You don’t just want them to go by the policy, saying, “Oh ‘cause it’s No Discount that means I’m going to say all the nice things but you want to hear the cons too” (personal communication, July 2, 2013)

Marie went on to note that peers had advised her to shorten the college admissions essay, which she viewed as a useful deviation from the No Discount Policy. However, before the first peer workshop Jennifer had discussed the differences between “discounting” and constructive criticism, giving examples of each type of feedback (fieldnotes, July 11, 2014). Unlike Jared and Savannah, who experienced a greater sense of authenticity within UB, Marie believed that the No Discount Policy inhibited constructive criticism. In other words, outside experiences influenced these impressions as much as the way this policy was actually implemented within the classroom.

Ariel: “People in UB Are Too Nice”

For Ariel, this process of negotiation and reconciliation created more conflicts than any of the other participants. During her first year in UB, Ariel tried to associate herself with academically-driven peers in the program by working hard to maintain good grades in all her classes. However, Ariel’s identifications shifted as a desire to associate with popular students in high school caused her to disassociate from UB peers. As a result, the emphasis on social integration within UB made her uncomfortable. For instance, when asked if her friends at high school would like the students at UB, she indicated:

At UB they have kids from different categories, different races and at school it's just one category that stays together. There's the popular kids, the not popular kids, the weird kids, the geek kids, the game kids. At UB they're all

mixed together. I feel like when I'm at UB, I have to talk to everyone, even if I don't want to. (personal communication, June 17, 2014)

For Ariel, this emphasis on integration conflicted with peer identifications in high school, and she found it difficult to reconcile identities across these communities. Indicating that these interactions with diverse peers were forced upon her by program policies and staff, she did not perceive opportunities to negotiate meanings within the UB community. With little control over her participation, she characterized its social interactions as inauthentic, complaining, “People in UB are too nice, and when people are too nice, they want something from you (personal communication, March 27, 2014). Much like Marie, then, she viewed kindness as a cause for suspicion rather than trust.

Despite this similarity, such distrust led to more negative interactions between Ariel and her UB peers during writing workshops. For the college admissions essay, Ariel composed a piece about her father's suicide. After the first workshop, she confided, “The peer feedback I got really pissed me off” (personal communication, July 2, 2013). Specifically, she was angry because a classmate from another high school had indicated that the essay included unnecessary details and suggested a stylistic edit: “I woke up one night to find my Mom sitting on the front porch steps crying harder than ~~me crying~~ [I did] during a stupid romance movie.” While Ariel felt the advice was wrong, she also questioned this peer's credibility: “She's not like a great student, and I'm not “D”ing her or anything” (personal communication, July 2, 2013). As indicated by this rather superficial reference to the No Discount policy, Ariel's did not full buy into this UB practice and reinscribed intuitional labels that delegitimized her peer. In offering her own feedback, Ariel felt equally ambivalent about the No Discount Policy. When initially asked how it impacted her writing, she hedged a bit: “I don't know, I guess it just makes you a better person, I guess. I mean you're saying stuff that shouldn't be said and you're keeping it to yourself so you're not

hurting anyone else's feelings (personal communication, July 8, 2014). Here again, Ariel seemed less than fully committed to this policy, and her ambivalence would turn to outright hostility as she later vented about not being able to share her true opinions.

While this was the most emotionally charged incident, Ariel also rejected help or feedback from other UB peers. Out of the four case study participants, she was the only one who did not make any revisions to her essay based on peer feedback. However, when teachers and advisors offered similar suggestions, she revised her essay accordingly. For instance, several peers noted that the end of her original essay did not explain how her father's death impacted her. Successive drafts revealed that she did not change her ending until her teacher made the same comment. When I pointed this out to her during a member check, she noted that she decided not to make changes because she didn't trust the feedback and was just too lazy. Similarly during the second workshop, Ariel exclusively worked with the tutor to edit her partners' paper. In contrast, the rest of the students discussed editing decisions with their partners (fieldnotes, July 11, 2013). While interactions with staff still provided legitimate peripheral participation, her negative identifications with peers undermined additional sources of support.

Yet, her interactions with high school peers did not reflect this distrust. When she decided to move up to the L4 economics class, she actively sought out peer feedback to fill in the gaps left by her teacher. She also complained that her Creative Writing class never included peer workshops. When I pointed out that she typically ignored peer feedback in UB, she responded, "I trust the kids in my class more than I did at UB because I'm closer to them, and they don't act like they are know-it-alls" (personal communication, December 19, 2013). Although Ariel initially wanted to associate herself with UB peers, changing identifications undermined their legitimacy and created resentment. Difficulties reconciling the popular

identity she was forming in high school and a limited sense of negotiation compounded these problems

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that both the high schools and UB acted as significant sponsors of the students' literacy development. Within each community, (de)segregation, material conditions, and class sizes impacted the more immediate social interactions that enabled and constrained students' writing. Within the first half of this chapter, I focused on how institutional policies shaped the classroom dynamics surrounding the participants' academic writing. I demonstrated how small class-sizes and mixed ability grouping within UB, gave participants the impression that their teachers were invested in their writing development and held high expectations. These positive expectations, in turn, created a classroom environment where the students themselves were more invested in writing and supporting each others' learning. In response to the students' level of investment, the teacher likewise reported having a more positive experience, which, as many of the participants observed, contributed to a more interactive and productive classrooms. A reciprocal influence had emerged between teacher and student investment.

This reciprocal relationship extended to their high school classroom but with less positive outcomes. To some extent, teacher expectations varied across the levels with some problematic implications for students within each track. The participants' descriptions of L2 or standard courses characterized them as rote, repetitive, and non-interactive. While the smaller class sizes within Gabrielle's ESL classes permitted more support and feedback, she sometimes found the writing instruction within them overly scaffolded. The L3 and enriched tracks were more complicated and seemed to be a catch all for a wide range of ability levels. As such, many of the participants and their teachers characterized the students in these courses as average. The participants indicated that, due to large class sizes, their teachers

were unable to address their individual needs, which left them feeling left behind or unchallenged. While Ariel and Marie had sought and received more rigorous instruction in L4 classes, this pattern of limited support still left them unable to fully access this curriculum.

Based on these challenges, investment among classmates, teachers, and even the participants themselves was often diminished. The participants repeatedly highlighted how the reciprocal influences between student and teacher investment constrained their writing in high school. Disengaged students complained, disrupted class, or refused to participate, which caused the teachers give up on instruction. This response from the teachers only seemed to make the students less invested, creating a cyclical effect. As illustrated by Ariel and Gabrielle, such limited investment could cause students to focus more on grades and procedural displays of the writing process rather than actual improvement.

The second half of this chapter shifted the focus from participation and investment towards the themes of authenticity and trust. The participants' accounts of their high school indicated that tracking and large class sizes created negative institutional labels and limited opportunities for diverse groups to interact. At times, they seemed aware of these institutional factors, but generally, these broader influences remained transparent. As such, these forms of academic segregation created factions among students that undermined trust and constrained social supports for writing. Both Jared and Savannah, for instance, reported that social cliques prevented them from sharing their writing or talking in class. Still, each participant experienced these factions differently based on their own social and institutional identity. Ariel, for example, identified herself as part of the popular group and, consequently, did not report these same concerns. Peer interactions within UB had an equally significant impact on students' writing practices and were largely inflected by both program policies and participants' high school experiences.

Taken together, both this chapter and the one that follows highlight the many ways in which UB provided a socially and culturally-inclusive space that nurtured participants' literacy development. However, as both of these chapters will also illustrate, the positive outcomes diminished once participants re-entered their high school and embarked on the college admissions process.

Chapter VI

Resistance and Compliance: Self Presentation in Scholarship and Admissions Essays

I get nervous 'cause that essay I heard is like the essay to get into college. I get nervous ' cause it's like, what if I mess up, what happens? I get rejected. (Jared, personal communication, October 28, 2013)

Applications ask that students engage in a rhetorical paradox: take a risk and disclose some aspect of their personal lives in what becomes a test of “emotional literacy.” The institutional request for personal writing for an unknown audience with hidden criteria is one that immediately puts the student in his or her place in the academy. (Paley, 1996, p. 85)

As these opening epigraphs contend, the college admissions essay, the first of many high-stakes tests of students' “college readiness” in writing, uses power and an implicit set of criteria to either exclude students or force them into institutional compliance. When coupled with scholarship essays, which can play a pivotal role in financing low-income students' higher education, these gatekeeping genres set the tone for writing in college. While daunting for any student, these genres can be especially disruptive for linguistically and racially diverse students since they are often adhering to a set of cultural conventions that conflict with their own backgrounds or agency as writers.

Such tensions underscore the experiences of two study participants—Jared and Marie—as they wrote their way into college. Chosen for both their clarity and robustness, these exemplar cases illustrate themes that emerged across the data as participants negotiated differences between home and school discourses. Both resident second-language writers, Jared and Marie received almost all of their education in the United States yet continued to experience cultural conflicts while writing college admissions and scholarship essays. Responding to different situational cues over the course of the writing process, Jared and

Marie alternated between envisioning their audience as sympathetic, judgmental, or even voyeuristic. These different influences and interpretations reinforced, delegitimized, and “othered” their cultural narratives and preferred literacy practices, which, in turn, shaped their identifications with writing both on and off the page.

Complicating difference-as-resource theories, I argue that the unique rhetorical context surrounding college admissions and scholarship essays can often exclude or exoticize students’ cultural background and primary discourses. Specifically, I claim that writing to a dispersed audience with power over material resources pressures students to present themselves in ways that stand out from the applicant pool while also blending in with institutional values. Within the first case study, I analyze the shifting situational cues that encouraged Jared to integrate and then marginalize his cultural background and home discourses. The second case study, Marie, demonstrates that while a potential resource within academic writing, difference is neither inherently empowering nor disempowering. Drawing upon her unique cultural background and primary discourses within admissions and scholarship essays helped Marie acquire material resources but did not always allow her to present herself in the way she wanted.

To support this claim, I first revisit the analytical frameworks guiding this chapter, Goffman’s self-presentation theory and Canagarajah’s difference-as-resource perspective. While I introduced these theoretical frameworks in chapter 2, reviewing specific concepts and terminology here will clarify the analysis of findings presented within this chapter. Next, I turn to the situational cues that guided Jared and Marie’s interpretations and responses in order to analyze the reasons why both students strategically chose to incorporate cultural narratives and home discourses. Finally, I examine the very different responses Jared and Marie got from teachers, advisors, admissions counselors, and scholarship committees in

order to illustrate how students' negotiations with academic writing were constrained by power differentials and material resources.

The Role of Social Interaction in Self-Presentation

A correctly staged and performed scene leads the audience to impute a self to a performed character, but this imputation—this self—is a product of the scene that comes off, and is not a cause of it. (Goffman, 1959, p. 72)

By connecting interactional encounters to self-presentation, Goffman's framework is useful in analyzing how students' consciously and unconsciously choose to represent themselves in college admissions essays. Within his interactional framework Goffman (1959, 1981) draws upon dramaturgical metaphors to establish the following major tenants:

- Self-hood reflects a series of staged performances, devised to manage the impressions of other participants by selectively supplying and withholding information.
- The selective management of information allows individuals to “define the situation,” or establish shared expectations for the social interaction.
- In verbal interactions, individuals can align themselves with multiple participants. As a result, the role of speaker (or, in this case, writer) should be divided into the *animator*, who states the words; the *author*, who selects them; and *principal*, whose position is represented.
- Certain prototypical performances can become fossilized into “parts” or “routines” that can be called up during similar occasions (p.16).
- Individuals' overall sense of self-competence comes from pulling off successful performances. With repeated success, these routines can become natural, and individuals come to see them as comprising their true self. In

foreign settings where these routines become unsuccessful, the individual's self-competence is diminished.

While these principles begin to acknowledge some of the broader influences that shape a performance, they do not fully consider cultural constraints and tensions. In many ways, composition scholarship that draws upon Goffman's work has been more sensitive to these dimensions of power and conflict. For instance, Newkirk (1997) points out that factors like age, religion, and social class can prevent students' autobiographical writing from maintaining a definition of situation consistent with an academic audience's. Similarly, Ivanic (1998) argues that individuals' life histories affect their access to socially privileged performances. Both argue that teachers should create a space for these identities within the classroom, but they do not consider how they can be blended within the same text. Canagarajah's model makes these moves more explicit.

From Deficit to Resource: Shifting Paradigms in Composition Studies

We should respect and value the linguistic and cultural peculiarities our students may display rather than suppressing them. We should strive to understand their values and interests and discover ways of engaging those in the writing process. (Canagarajah, 2002, p.224)

In writing and literacy studies, there has been a shift away from the difference-as-deficit models that tried to convert culturally and linguistically diverse students into adopting academic English and the relativistic orientations that encouraged them to shuttle between discourses. A growing call for bilateral approaches invites students to blend academic discourses with their own values, perspectives, and styles, arguing that academic audiences should accommodate these new alternatives. This difference-as-resource perspective highlights how multilingual students have resources that can help rather than hinder academic writing (Canagarajah, 2002, 2012; Campano, 2007; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992 ;

Jordan, 2009, 2012; Valdes, 2003; Villalva, 2006; Yosso, 2005). As Canagarajah (2002) observes, privileging or compartmentalizing discourses can exclude or split the subjectivities of these students (p.225). Using this bilateral model, diverse students can incorporate their preferred expressions of self-hood within academic writing.

While valuable in promoting critical awareness and helping students represent their values and interests, power dynamics and material constraints complicate difference-as-resource models. In some ways, Canagarajah (2002) already acknowledges the influence of these dimensions by noting that the self is comprised of multiple social codes, registers, and discourses that hold unequal status and can create conflicts within and between subjects (p. 105). At the same time, he makes several claims that downplay the significance of these elements. Arguing that more effective writing emerges when authors mix discourses, he presents several successful examples of blended texts from advanced students and scholars. However, the pedagogical implications of such research remain problematic. These writers may have a greater sense of authority and willingness to blend discourses than the vast majority of students, especially those who have been labeled remedial. Indeed, LeCourt (2004) has found that basic writers' concern with academic and economic success often caused them to compartmentalize or exclude other discourses within their writing, despite her attempts to welcome them into the classroom.

Equally problematic is Canagarajah's (2012) claim that cross-cultural contact naturally presents opportunities for blended modes of communication and new possibilities for self-hood. Arguing that students are already unconsciously using these strategies outside the classroom, he believes they just need to be welcomed by teachers and brought to the conscious level. To support this assertion, he presents examples from his own classroom, noting that he provided a safe space but never explicitly taught these strategies. Specifically,

he identifies four macro-level strategies for negotiating different discourses that emerged within this setting, noting that they may manifest themselves in different ways within other interactions:

- Envoicing: “Encoding ones identity and location in talk and texts” (p. 80).
- Recontextualization: Guiding the reader’s interpretations of the text and getting them to accept envoicing.
- Interactional: aligning readers’ and writers’ cultural and linguistic resources.
- Entextualization: adapting negotiation strategies based on readers’ reactions.

Emphasizing that not all attempts to blend discourses prove effective, Canagarajah notes that the ultimate distinction between error and strategy lies in the audience’s uptake. For this reason, he defines performative competence within these cross-cultural negotiations as the ability to gauge uptake and respond accordingly. Canagarajah suggests that by making these strategies more explicit, teachers can enhance students’ performative competence both within and beyond the classroom. However, as the cases presented within this chapter will illustrate, high-stakes, real-world writing can complicate this notion of performative competence.

Finally, as Matsuda (2014) points out, Canagarajah’s focus on the most dramatic examples of blended discourses can lead to “linguistic tourism,” which distorts the field’s construction of reality by pointing to a few extreme examples that emphasize difference over similarities (p.6). While Canagarajah himself acknowledges more subtle forms of negotiation, he does not present them in his examples. These cases will highlight the dangers of the tourist orientation, showing how it privileges seemingly exotic cultural and linguistic backgrounds while continuing to marginalize those that may appear more commonplace.

Defining the Situation

Because situational cues influence how students define a situation, it is important to examine how the initial social encounters surrounding the college admissions essay shaped

Jared and Marie's performances. Analyzing how these performances were socially constructed can offer a glimpse into the sophisticated thought processes that guided both students' decisions to blend discourses. Despite the very different reception their texts would later receive, neither these students' approaches nor the teacher's instruction can be dismissed as a simple failures to define the situation. Rather, their performances reflected deliberate attempts to negotiate institutional demands with personal motives, values, and interests.

As indicated within the faculty handbook, the goal of the Senior Seminar course was to introduce the college-admissions essay in a supportive, low-stakes, environment. Jennifer, the course instructor, selected readings and designed activities to support this objective. In order to help students gain a sense of audience, she asked them to read and summarize a short how-to guide written by an admissions counselor. This article emphasized the importance of standing out by taking risks, incorporating sensory detail, developing a clear voice, and starting off with a hook. The reading was followed the next day by a "Show-Don't-Tell" worksheet, asking students to identify and write passages that established mood and incorporated sensory detail. Students also read and discussed sample admissions essays.

While this curriculum significantly influenced the definition of the situation, the social context surrounding this essay extended far beyond both the Senior Seminar class and UB program. Used by over five hundred universities, the Common Application was the initiating text that had the most direct influenced on the students' performances. Establishing the purpose and form, the instructions indicated: "The essay demonstrates your ability to write clearly and concisely on a selected topic and helps you to distinguish yourself in your own voice. What do you want the readers of your application to know about you apart from courses, grades, and test scores" (Common Application Board of Directors, 2013). Much like the how-to article, then, these instructions emphasized style, voice, and the importance of standing out. Although students could chose to write a 250-650 word essay on one of five

different prompts, all of the study participants chose the same option, likely because it was the most open-ended: “Some students have a background or story that is so central to their identity that they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sound like you, then please share your story” (Common Application Board of Directors, 2013). Both the instructions and the prompt invited students to present their identity through a personal story, with little indication as to what type of content would be most appropriate. Contextualized by the course readings, discussions, and activities in Senior Seminar, the quality of the essay seemed to be based largely on style, voice, originality, and use of detail.

Both Jared and Marie strategically used their cultural and linguistic resources to create performances based on these situational definitions, which continued to develop and shift throughout the writing process. However, these resources were not inherently empowering or disempowering. Rather, their uptake shifted across the multiple social encounters in which their writing was produced and received.

Admitted or Denied: (II) Legitimate Resources for the College Essay

The initiating texts Jared encountered in Senior Seminar directly influenced his definition of the situation. For instance, when I asked him in an interview, “What makes a good admissions essay,” he offered this response:

Admissions essays should be about what makes you want to become what you want to become, like an in-depth, not just a [snaps fingers], you want to be because of the money. Because anyone can write place of birth, where you’re born like that, but I think with an admissions essay, you have to write like a story, like authors make books, so if you make it like that, people will want to read your thing. (personal communication, July 2, 2013).

In this statement, Jared emphasized the importance of presenting an idealized self that was sincere, altruistic, and unique. Matching the wording in the Common Application prompt, Jared indicated that a story was the best way to achieve this goal of standing out. Likewise,

his concern with detail reflected the influence of the “Show-don’t-tell exercise,” and the how-to article from Senior Seminar. Jared believed that out of all these points, detail would be the most important in making his performance interesting, and both his writing process and the product reflected this emphasis.

However, like the verbal interactions in Goffman’s (1981) research, Jared’s also aligned his writing with multiple activities and roles from his home life. In embedding his sense of identity and location within the essay, what Canagarajah (2012) has referred to as envoicing, Jared drew upon one of the roles he found most significant: being the son of a Peruvian immigrant. Based upon his definition of the situation and preferred roles, Jared decided to write about how his father’s ability to succeed in a foreign land and eventual heart disease inspired his decision to become a cardiac surgeon. His envoicing, then, took an indirect route as he presented himself through his father. Although he generally found invention difficult, he reported, “I felt strong that I knew what to write about (personal communication, July 2, 2013). Drawing on a performance that was strongly tied to his own values helped Jared develop a strong authorial self or sense of authority and presence within his text (Ivanic, 1998). When I asked Jared to map out social influences on his writing (see Appendix F), he identified his father as his most important resource. Explaining this decision, Jared indicated that his father frequently taught him life lessons by sharing his experiences growing up in Peru and immigrating to America, and he used these stories in his writing. The way he chose to embed his identity within the text, then, was through these family narratives.

His father also had a more direct impact on his invention strategies by collaborating as an “author,” a contributor of words, and “principal” or source of ideas (Goffman, 1981). In multiple interviews, Jared recalled that while he struggled with adding detail and putting thoughts into words, he found conversation to be an effective strategy for overcoming these challenges. While writing his admission essay, he frequently called his father on the phone in

order to flesh out details and help him find the right words for his ideas. This was a rare opportunity for his father to participate in his son's academic writing. Jared commented that his dad often tried to help him with schoolwork, an experience he described as "awkward," explaining, "He's just sitting there. He wants to be there just because I need help. I don't want to admit it to him and tell him, but I'm already past him; his education doesn't go past what I'm doing" (personal communication, October 28, 2013). Writing about this topic, then, provided a unique opportunity for his father to become a legitimate resource.

Sustained opportunities for negotiation with his teacher also helped to legitimize these resources. During a conference with his teacher, Jennifer, I observed them drawing upon recontextualization strategies to guide the interpretation of the text and interactional strategies to align their language resources. Before handing his paper to her, Jared recontextualized the situation by pointing out that this was the first time he had ever put 110% effort into an essay and that he became so emotional when writing it that he began to cry. Whether deliberate or not, Jared's decision to foreground his investment in the topic seemed to guide Jennifer towards a favorable interpretation of his performance. She quickly responded by praising him for all of his hard work and stating that it showed in the quality of his writing. Jared had also written that his father worked "under the table" as a bus boy when he first arrived in the United States, and Jennifer initially questioned the appropriateness of this phrase. Jared responded by pointing out that he liked having it in there because sounded like something his father would say. Together, they ended up deciding that the phrase seemed to fit, and Jennifer realigned her linguistic resources to match Jared's by deciding to accept this nonstandard usage (fieldnotes, July, 18, 2013).

Jared's negotiation strategies may have been an effective device for getting Jennifer to accept his definition of the situation, but they also seemed to reflect a sincere performance. After this conference, for instance, Jared related to me that even though he was very nervous

to write this essay, his father's immigrant narratives reminded him that if a man could come from a third-world country with no family or friends and make it worthwhile, he could get into college (fieldnotes, July 14, 2013). In working with immigrant students, Delgado-Gaiten (1994, 2005) and Campano (2007) have found that immigrant parents' narratives of struggle and overcoming obstacles encouraged their children to be confident, work hard in school, and become more engaged with writing. Jared seemed to gain similar strengths from these family narratives, which transferred a sense of immigrant optimism that partially mitigated the high-stakes nature of this particular performance.

Goffman has found that individuals can become increasingly sincere about their performance, which seems to have been the case for Jared. When I later asked him why he became so emotional when writing this piece, he offered the following response:

J: I have respect for my dad, but then when I wrote this, I guess I had a newfound respect, a respect I never realized at first.

S: Why do you think writing this kind of made you have some newfound respect for him?

J: Because in my head I know what happened. I guess just writing the paper . . . I don't know how to say this, the right words for it, but it increases my realizing it. A lot of people do math problems in their head and don't get it right, but on paper they get it right; it's the same thing. (personal communication, July 2, 2013)

As Canagarajah (2002) argues, "texts not only *mean* but *do*. Their functionality goes to the extent of reconstructing reality, rather than simply reflecting reality" (p. 218). Writing about his father seemed to have helped Jared reconstruct his reality in a way that reinforced familial ties and his cultural heritage. In many ways, his motives in writing this piece reflected a desire not only to write about their relationship but to strengthen it. The first time we met, Jared reported that since he had a hard time expressing his emotions out loud, he like to use writing to share his feelings with others. Significantly, Jared indicated that this essay was the only piece of academic writing he shared with his father, explaining "I felt really proud about it, and I thought it would be cool, make himself feel better" (personal communication, June

24, 2014). In writing this essay, then, he tried to simultaneously align himself with college admissions counselors, his Senior Seminar teacher, and his father.

Jared's final draft reflected (see Figure. 6.1) the influence of these multiple roles and activities. Incorporating anecdotes allowed him to show rather than just tell why his father was his hero. His use of sensory detail appeared throughout the piece to maintain his reader's interest as he described his father's arrival on "a cold October night with frost in the air" and his rescue from a vicious dog with "razor sharp" teeth. He was also able to draw upon his self-sponsored writing to establish mood in his conclusion, a skill which was also emphasized within the "Show-Don't-Tell" exercise. Jared indicated that Creative Expressions, a songwriting elective at UB, and his experience writing ballads for his guitar, helped him develop this ability, which he felt he displayed most effectively in his conclusion: "Like a love song has love mood, a sad song, sad mood like that kind of thing. So if you read my paper, you read about how like painful it was to watch my dad drive off (personal communication, July 2, 2013). Through his writing process, interview responses, and finished product, then, Jared displayed his ability to strategically draw on a rich array of linguistic resources across multiple settings in order to pull off this performance

Jennifer demonstrated her overall uptake of Jared's performance by giving him an 87% and writing "love this," on his essay. Since Jennifer worked directly with Jared over an extended period of time, she was given multiple opportunities to see, not just read, what this topic meant to him, and these interactions may have shaped her responses. Jared's self-appraisals of his work likewise reflected his growing sense of competence with his performance. Before Senior Seminar, Jared rated his confidence level at a one out of ten (see Appendix D), indicating that he was completely uncertain that he would be able to successfully write a college admissions essay. His confidence shifted dramatically, and by the

end of the summer he rated his confidence at a ten, indicating he was “completely certain” that he could successfully write a college admissions essay.

Figure 6.1. The final draft of “My Motivation,” the first version of Jared’s essay.

My Motivation

My hero is my dad. He is a man from Lima, Peru My father arrived to the United States of America on a cold October night with frost in the air. Having no friends or family. He worked under the table as a bus boy working all day and the days he didn't, he was in a classroom learning English. He took classes at MIT to become a technician. He got a job in General Electric where he was an assembler. He worked all day doing over time so that he could pay off loans and start saving to buy a house. The only time he came home was to sleep. Later on, the factory was bought by Ametek Aero Space and he was a technician. He worked all day to pay off the house, which he did in five years.

My father has proven time and time again that he is my hero. I remember one cold fall night, I was six years old when I was leaving my aunt's house. As I was walking to the car outside, a neighbor opened the door of her house and a vicious dog came flying out. The dog's teeth were razor sharp. I saw the dog's hatred in its eyes. As it was coming at me, I tried climbing into the bed of my uncle's pick-up truck. I turned around to see how close the dog was to me; out of nowhere I saw my dad stand in the way of the dog, ready to defend me. There was no fear in his eyes. He yelled "hey!" in an angry voice with his fist ready to throw a punch. At that moment in time I saw that no one could compare to my dad because he risked getting bit or worse so I can be safe.

When my father turned 65 years old, he had a leaky aortic valve and he needed a double bypass surgery. I felt completely helpless. I thought my dad, who was my hero, was dying. He made an appointment with the doctor to schedule the surgery in Massachusetts. He drove to my sister's house to sleepover there so that she could drive him to the hospital. The sadness I was feeling was unbearable. When I saw my dad drive away, my heart was pounding and my tears were falling like Niagara Falls. After the surgery, my dad was hooked up to breathing tubes and there were other tubes everywhere in his body. My father was barely clinging to life. His eyes were closed. For a moment I thought he wasn't going to make it. But I knew he was going to be fine because I held his hand in tears and we made eye contact. At that moment I knew everything was going to be fine. I decided to become a cardiologist because I wanted to save someone else's dad, so that his son wouldn't have to see their hero fall. ^{love this!}

Shifting Towards an Individualistic Orientation

When you get a question that seems to ask you to write about something or someone else, remember that colleges ultimately want to learn about you. (Accepted: 50 Successful College Admissions Essays, Tanabe & Tanabe, 2011, p. 37).

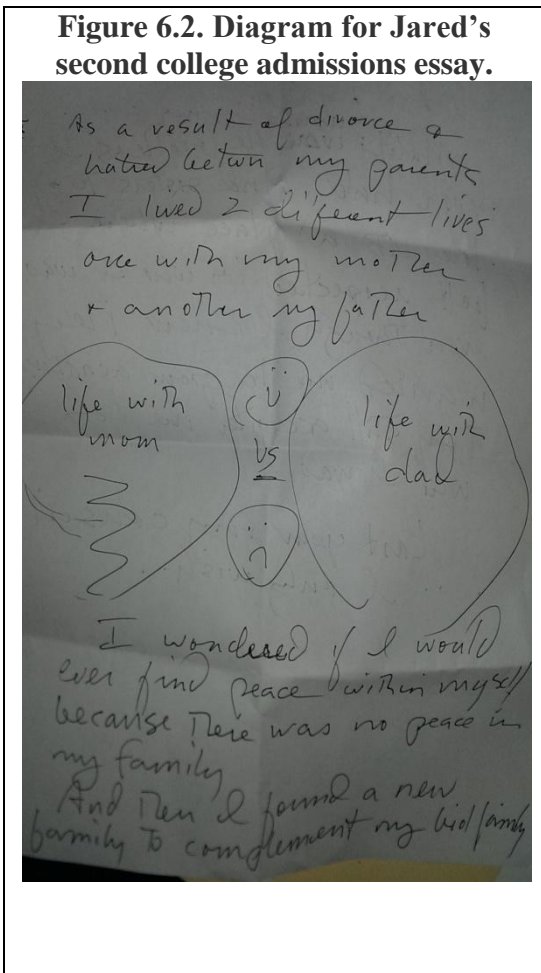
Shortly after the summer program, Jared was already facing pressure to change his essay since he had recently gone on a campus visit where the college admissions officer advised students to write about themselves instead of their parents. This pressure mounted as he presented his essay to his high school English teacher who wrote in the margins, “It’s not about you.” In response to this growing pressure, Jared’s definition of the situation shifted from sharing a story to writing a persuasive appeal, and he later indicated, “Application essay you have to convince the admissions officer to accept you, which is hard” (personal communication, October 28, 2013). As the definition of the situation became less open, Jared’s willingness to negotiate discourses diminished, as both his writing process and finished product would later reflect.

Gary, Jared’s UB advisor, who mentored him after the summer program, became a part of this growing consensus that he needed to rewrite his paper. Gary had a very different definition of the situation than Jennifer, and complained to me that the essays coming out of the Senior Seminar class that year were not particularly strong. Jared’s essay stood out to him as a particularly ineffective piece, and he recalled offering this response to him: “This is the person I value most, whatever that thing is. That’s not successful; they are going to ignore it” (personal communication, May 5, 2014). Gary’s concern, here, seemed to reflect what was left unstated in the prompt, an implicit expectation that students present themselves directly. In many ways, Gary’s definition of the situation aligned with empirical research on the college admissions essay. Gathering think-aloud protocols from admissions officers as they read student essays, both Payley (1996) and Warren (2013) discovered a preference for direct forms of self-revelation. As Canagarajah has argued (2002), traditions of personal writing within the United States often reflect an individualistic orientation whereas many other cultures emphasize the collective, using writing to affirm, consolidate, and enhance

community values. Therefore, students from other cultures often feel uncomfortable writing about themselves or touting their individual accomplishments. This cultural difference may help to explain Jared’s reluctance to represent himself more directly. Indicating, “I’m not really a person to write about myself,” Jared reported, “I’m having a really hard time writing it, ‘cause I kept writing it throwing it away, writing it throwing it away (personal communication, December 15, 2014). Not able to draw on his own cultural background, Jared’s writing process stalled.

Gary attempted to bridge this gap. Stuck on what to write, Jared reported that he

Figure 6.2. Diagram for Jared’s second college admissions essay.



generated a list of alternative topics, and Gary encouraged him to write about Upward Bound in response to the prompt, “Describe a place or environment where you are perfectly content. What do you do or experience there, and why is it meaningful to you?” (Common Application Board of Directors, 2013). Doing the actual writing while Jared talked, Gary shared the role of animator, author, and principle. Together, they created a diagram to plan his essay, (See Figure 6.2) and during an interview that evening, Jared anticipated that it would help him overcome his writer’s block. However, receiving no follow up support, Jared struggled to make these changes.

Both the topic of the essay and the writing process went from being a collective to a largely individualistic endeavor that offered little room for sustained negotiations.

Figure 6.3. “Finding My Family,” Jared’s second college admissions essay.

“Finding My Family”

Growing up my parents were divorced. I was a young boy that did not know the person I wanted to become yet. My parents absolutely hated each other. My mother had custody of me. But for the first three months of them being divorced I was not able to see my father because of a restraining order my mother put on him. Ever since I was young I felt incomplete.

Living with my mom was very cumbersome. We lived on the top floor of an apartment building, the building was cockroach infected. Every time it rained water dripped from the ceiling. Our neighbor downstairs always played loud music so much we couldn't get much sleep some nights. Life was so different without my father because I hadn't seen him since the day my mother and I walked out of the house.

As time went by I was able to see my father when I was around five years; he always tried to make me feel happy as if nothing happened. The longer my parents were separated the more resentment he felt towards my mother. He tried to tell me these thoughts about my mother and as a naive child, I believed him. My mother also felt the same feelings about my father. I was being torn apart by my parents not knowing what to do with myself.

As an adolescent I saw myself becoming someone that had no purpose. I had no motivation. I had no dreams or goals, all I wanted to do is play my guitar and not have a care in the world. Every time my birthday or christmas came along I could never spend it with my whole family, I always had to choose between my mother or father. I could never celebrate either of those events with both. In middle school I played football. Both of my parents attended every game I played. But after the game was over I didn't know who to go to my mother or my father.

At the end of my freshmen year of high school I was accepted to this summer program called Upward Bound. All I knew about this program is that it would help me get into college. the first day I attended the program I knew no one. I felt like an outcast because I was the only new kid from my school while everyone else came from a different school. At that point in time I felt like I made a mistake going to the program ; But all of a sudden these two girls who's name were Laura and Faith randomly came up to me and started talking to me. I was amazed of how I made friends so fast. Later on because of that program I became out going and a lot more sociable. I found myself to be always smiling. But most importantly I found people that accepted me of who I was and encouraged me to try new things. Most importantly I found a new family and a new place I can call home. In my second year of attending Upward Bound I had a roommate named Gerome. He and I came from different schools, we liked different things, we were completely different. But as I spent more time getting to know him we became like brothers. In Upward Bound I had the brothers and sisters I always wanted. Even when the program is over the family never dies. I know if I ever needed anyone I could always turn to the people I met in Upward Bound.

Objectivity over Sentimentalism

DON'T write a Hallmark card. [. . .] We can all write glowing stories about our families, but it takes a more insightful person to write truthfully and even critically (Accepted: 50 Successful College Admissions Essays, Tanabe & Tanabe, 2011, p.47).

Within his second essay, “Finding My Family” (see Figure 6.3), Jared’s self presentation shifted drastically from “My Motivation.” In this new piece, Jared wrote about how his parents’ divorce destroyed his motivation and confidence until he went to Upward Bound and found a new family to reinstate these qualities. His father morphed from the hero who saved Jared from being ripped apart by a vicious dog to a sort of antihero who helped to tear Jared apart emotionally:

The longer my parents were separated the more resentment [my father] felt towards my mother. He tried to tell me these thoughts about my mother and as a naïve child, I believed him. My mother also felt the same feelings about my father. I was being torn apart by my parents not knowing what to do with myself.

Instead of idealizing his father’s immigrant mobility, as he had in “My Motivation,” this second piece emphasized their poverty after his parents’ separation: “We lived on the top floor of an apartment building, the building was cockroach infected. Every time it rained water dripped from the ceiling.” Goffman (1959) has referred to this type of self-presentation as “negative idealization,” noting that while individuals typically prefer to signal a rise in society, they are sometimes obliged to “offer the kind of scene that realizes the observers’ extreme stereotypes of hapless poverty” (p.40). This negative idealization was deliberate. After his meeting with Gary, Jared indicated that he needed to explain why he earned low grades at the beginning of high school. His altered performance incorporated these depictions of poverty and family discord in order to strategically highlight prior obstacles to his academic achievement.

However, this decision to offer a more negative characterization was also an attempt to make his performance more believable. When I asked Jared why the depiction of his family changed so dramatically, he offered this response:

J: No family is perfect. I wanted to write the second one more factual than stories, pretty much facts about what made me the person I am today. I took the raw facts, I didn't try to sugar coat it. I didn't try doing that. I just put the raw facts there.

S: Okay, why did you decide to do the raw facts instead of more a story?

J: I felt like it was more powerful, more honest. (personal communication June 24, 2014)

As both Jared's reflections and the essay itself (see Figure 4.3) indicated, unlike the draft he produced in Senior Seminar, the second version included mainly facts, with few sensory details other than the description of the leaky, cockroach infested apartment he shared with his mom. The rewrite also omitted the emotionally evocative descriptions, such as "my tears were falling like Niagra Falls," that established mood in his first conclusion.

In some ways, this move towards objectivity better matched the aesthetics of an academic audience. Newkirk (1997) has pointed out that the cultural elite, including most English teachers and admissions counselors, find emotional appeals uncomfortable because their class backgrounds have allowed them to distance themselves from everyday exigencies. Paradoxically, then, Jared's self presentation projected a lower class status to explain his academic struggles and identified with the cultural elite by bracketing emotions. Newkirk has also argued that academic audiences tend to dislike tributaries, finding them too sentimental and one-dimensional. Presenting his father as an antihero in the second essay helped Jared present a more balanced, discerning perspective. Still, even as he tried to approximate this privileged aesthetic, he fell short. For instance, rather than replacing the more conventional descriptions in his first essay with the irony and playfulness valued by the elite, Jared simply avoided any attempts to establish mood and incorporate sensory detail.

The Narrative Turn and Transformed Self

Use your essay to show how you've grown or developed over the years. If you are describing a challenge, you might focus on how you overcame it or succeeded despite the obstacle. (Accepted: 50 Successful College Admissions Essays, Tanabe & Tanabe, 2011, p. 39).

Despite these challenges, Gary's response to "Finding My Family" demonstrated his uptake of the new performance:

I think that he realized that it has taken him time to make something of his life; he realized that his earlier work was not great, but nevertheless, he's on the path. I felt like that turned out to be successful essay because of that, because he didn't attempt to try to bullshit anyone, and he honestly looked into himself" (personal communication, May 10, 2014).

Confirming Jared's appraisal that an objective depiction would seem more realistic, Gary indicated that the new essay didn't "bullshit anyone" and allowed him to "honestly [look] into himself." However, Gary's response here also emphasized the importance of the transformed self the new essay presented. Newkirk (1997, 2004) has argued that the turn, the moment where the writer moves from rendering to reflection, has become an increasingly important feature of personal writing. This turn has allowed writers demonstrate malleability, transformation, and new insights on the past, qualities that reflect a very masculine, North American ethos of self-determination.

Describing the impression he wanted to make on the college admissions counselors, Jared indicated his conscious decision to incorporate this turn in his second essay: "I wanted to show that because Upward Bound I became more determined, more confident, and a better student, and that I am not only a decent student, I get along with the Upward Bound community really well" (Personal Interview 6/24/14). By focusing primarily on his father in the first essay, Jared was not able use this turn to demonstrate how he had grown or gained new insights on his experience. However, writing about Upward Bound gave him the

opportunity to construct a self that reflected qualities valued within academic communities.

While his father was the hero and source of motivation in the first essay, then, both Jared and his UB “family” took this role in the second.

Between Sincerity and Cynicism

While the feedback Jared got from Gary’s and his high school teacher suggested that the second essay demonstrated “college readiness,” it compromised Jared’s sense of authority over the piece. Moving through what Goffman (1959) has referred to as a “cycle of disbelief-to-belief,” Jared initially questioned the sincerity of his performance (p. 20). When I asked him which version he liked best, he offered this response:

J: I think as an essay . . . I think the first one

S: Okay, why is that?

J: Because this one [“Finding my Family”] I think I just, I felt like when I was writing it, I BS’d everything. Even though I didn’t, it just felt like it; I felt like I didn’t put 100% into it like the one I did in Upward Bound. (personal communication, January, 15, 2014)

Acknowledging that the second piece made a better college admissions essay, he felt the first was a better essay both because he put more effort into writing it and, unlike Gary, found it to be a more authentic performance. However, after he had been admitted to college and this performance was rewarded, he adopted a less cynical stance, emphasizing the sincerity of this second performance: “I didn’t want to lie to that person even if I never meet them. It is my conscience. If I wrote something completely fake, it would probably hurt me on the inside. Since I answered truthfully, I felt like even though it might not be the best essay, at least it was truthful for me” (personal communication, June 24, 2014). Instead of maintaining his impression that the second essay was mostly “BS,” Jared warmed up to this performance. Still, his sense of competence seemed to diminish, and when asked to rate his confidence with this essay at the end of the school year (see Appendix D), his score had dropped eight

points. The experience of having his performance rejected and conforming to academic conventions, then, had a negative impact on his identity as a writer.

Canagarajah (2012) has indicated that even in successful negotiations of linguistic resources, students may decide that dominant conventions best suit their intentions and purpose. However, this did not seem to be the case for Jared. Unlike the entextualization strategies Canagarajah has described, which allow writers to make ongoing adjustments to ensure the uptake of their envoicing, Jared's revisions reflected a rather one-sided negotiation. Indeed, both his reflections on this piece and his overall sense of competence indicated that he capitulated to power rather than negotiating it. Despite his successful negotiations within Senior Seminar this performative competence did not transfer, a finding with significant implications for cross-cultural communication and college preparation.

Marie's (Dis)Empowering Family Narratives: Moving from Connection to Conflict

I tend to cry whenever I write emotional stuff, so it's really hard for me to write when it comes to emotional stuff. That's why I don't maybe want to remember it, but when I'm writing story and it's emotional, I will cry. I don't know why, but I still cry. (Marie, personal communication, July 2, 2013)

While Jared may have drawn upon cultural commonplaces that didn't allow him to stand out in his admissions essay, Marie often worried she stood out too much and would be exoticized as a result. Indelibly marked by war, Marie's life history provided her with diverse topoi that could extend readers' cultural awareness and challenge their assumptions. Born in Liberia, Marie and her family fled their home when rebels burned their village to the ground before torturing, raping, and killing many of its inhabitants. Although her father was killed, Marie, her mother, and her twin brother managed to make it to a refugee camp in Ghana, where she was raised from the age of five to nine, when they were granted asylum to come to the United States. The summer before she started 8th grade, her mother, whom she

described as not in her right state of mind after the war, sent them to live with two different aunts in Riverview. At both Aunts' houses, limited economic resources left Marie and her brother sleeping on chairs and responsible for buying their own groceries. Despite these conflicts, family relationships remained extremely important to Marie, and while she hoped to eventually reconcile with her biological mother, she would often refer to her aunts and uncles as parents and cousins as brothers.

While Marie believed writing about these experiences helped her get into and pay for college, it was also a tremendous source of pain. Enrolled in the same Senior Seminar course as Jared, Marie got the support she needed in the UB summer program to blend home discourses into her college admissions essay and to highlight her differences without reinforcing stereotypes or feeling exoticized. However, as financial pressures mounted over the school year and her support system dwindled, Marie was uncertain how to perform the role of “needy” student for scholarship essays without confirming potential stereotypes and felt “othered” as a result.

Successful Negotiation within the Admissions Essay

Despite being in the same Senior Seminar class as Jared, Marie defined the situation somewhat differently. When asked why she chose to write about her experiences during the war, refugee camp, and immigration to America, Marie responded: “I want to write my story and how I struggle and come to America ‘cause you’re applying to college, and your telling them why they should pick you, right? So, I’m going to tell them if they give me the opportunity to further my education, I’m going to really appreciate it” (personal communication, July 2, 2013). Like Jared, in defining the situation, Marie drew upon the language of the common application, describing her essay as a story. However, unlike Jared she realized her narrative had to make an argument. In making this argument, the information

Marie withheld was as strategic as what she presented. For instance, she offered this explanation of why she rejected other potential topics:

I picked this topic because having a motivator was not my thing ‘cause my mom she didn’t motivate me. She had me when she was sixteen, so if I said my mom is my motivator, then that’s saying that I want to get pregnant when I’m sixteen, and if I say my environment, my environment is not influencing me ‘cause people I see do drugs. I hope they see that I’m really serious about my school. That no matter how many people I am friends with up to no good, I still have not done any of those stuff that my mom thinks I’m gonna do.
(personal communication, July 2, 2013)

Unlike Jared, Marie worried that writing about significant people in her life would reinforce potential stereotypes and cause her audience to see her as unmotivated and possibly even delinquent. Due to this concern, her envoicing was more directly self-revelatory, and her family members would be supporting rather than main characters in her text. By carefully selecting her topic, Marie tried to present an idealized character that would appeal to her audiences’ values of perseverance and education.

Despite this difference in their definition, like Jared, Marie also seemed to be strongly influenced by the course readings and the “Show Don’t Tell” exercise, noting the importance of standing out and using sensory detail. To stand out, Marie decided to incorporate graphic scenes in her essay, explaining, “If you start out with something interesting, like the blood coming from his eyes, they’ll be like, “Whoa, what happened to them? And then they’ll start reading it. They want to find out more” (personal communication, July 2, 2013). As her college admissions essay shows (see Figure 6.4), Marie used the sound of gun shots to capture the reader’s attention and wove brutal depictions of death and torture throughout the piece. Rendering these scenes objectively, she gave very little indication as to how she felt when she saw her neighbors killed or realized her father was never coming back.

Figure 6.4. Final draft of Marie’s college admissions essay

The sound of their guns woke us up. My father holding my hand, ran outside with my mom and my brother. Outside the rebels were shouting, “bruler la maison”, which means “burn the house”. Fire was thrown upon our house. Smoke from other houses covered the sky. As the fire blazed we started running toward the forest. The running was hard because the ground was littered with dead bodies. The running came to a stop when branches hit my face. Rain came pouring down on us. My father went to find shelter. He hugged me then left for his journey.

The next day, my father was nowhere to be found. The men went to find water, food, and shelter. They returned with the news that they had found a lake. At the lake, everyone was united. Daylight came and all we heard was silence. We decided to return home. On our way there, I saw dead bodies that were beyond recognition. It felt like my father was one of them. The silence was broken with people crying for one another. All were lost in the fire. Books and pictures burnt to ashes. With nothing left the only choice was to relocate to another village.

On our journey, the rebels enclosed on us with guns. They laid us down on the bloody ground and herded us together with sticks, rocks, and shoes. Everything went black. I awoke to the smell of gasoline, sounds of screams, and sounds of laughter. One by one the rebels threw matches on us. I could hardly breathe, coughing constantly. On my right was a pregnant lady who was separated from the group. Her stomach was cut open with a knife. A baby was crying. Next I heard a loud gunshot and silence. On my left, my mom whispered “executer lorsque les rebelles se rapprochent”, which means “run when rebels come close”. As they approached my family, myself and others took off, the shooting of guns and screaming of people were all I could hear. Once the shooting stopped, the ones who survived were taken to a refugee camp.

At the camp there was hope. We were given shelter and food. Occasionally, trucks came with Arthur, Caillou, and ABC’s books. I read them numerous times to understand. One day my mom brought us a letter. The letter stated that my family and I passed the test to depart to America. All that ran through my mind was that I could continue my education. We arrived in Minnesota February 04, 2004. The lights glowing, the street building tall into the sky everything looked amazing except the cold. I felt like I was in a refrigerator. A few weeks later we started school. My brother and I were put in ELL, English Language Learning. The first day of school was a disaster, everyone spoke English. In class, we wrote about professions that interested us. I decided I wanted to become a doctor.

I always hear elders say education is the key to success. I appreciate the trucks that came to the refugee camp. I want to recreate that happiness for others that the trucks brought to me. Although my dad is not around I have dreams of him telling me to push harder when things seem lost. I pray to God for strength in pursuits of my goals. I am a strong woman who knows what she wants in life. I will not stop until I reach success.

However, this bracketing of her emotions within the essay hardly captured what she felt while writing. Reporting being sad and overwhelmed to have to relive this experience, Marie often cried while writing, as did the tutors and teachers who read it. Marie viewed this emotional response as a successful uptake of her performance. When asked if these reactions were what she wanted, she replied, “Yes, because the colleges are emotional, and they might be like, ‘Okay, I guess she’s onto something, and she needs help, so I think we should consider her as to come to our school’” (personal communication, July 18, 2013). These scenes, then, offered a strategic device to capture her audience’s interest and sympathy. However, she also frequently feared that her depictions were too graphic and that readers would find them distasteful. When asked what she disliked about her essay, she indicated, “I think I give too much detail cause some people cannot take it if you give so much vivid detail that it makes the picture, you know what I mean, some people don’t really like it” (personal communication July 31, 2013). Specifically, she pointed to her concern over this scene: “On my right was a pregnant lady separated from the group. Her stomach was cut open with a knife. A baby was crying. Next, I heard a loud gunshot and silence.” This detail was new to this draft, and Marie indicated that its source was a conversation with her mother:

I called my mom; I don’t live with my mom, I live with my auntie, but my mom, I called her and asked her was I right with all the stuff ‘cause I didn’t just want to put something and make sure it’s not right, and I told her basically the outline of what I wrote, and she was like, “You did a good job, and you’re forgetting one more thing, and I’m like, “What’s that,” and she’s like, “Remember when we were laying on the floor and then there was like on our right, there was a lady they took.” “And I was like oh, the pregnant lady. I don’t think I should put that ‘cause it’s a very sad story to see a baby get killed in front you, you know, like right there.” So she’s like, “Well, I mean you think about it, your story’s already sad enough, people on the floor, dead, beaten by rocks, I mean, put it there and tell how you really felt about it,” so that’s what I put in. (personal communication, July 31, 2013)

Like Jared, writing about a shared experience that was personally and academically significant motivated Marie to seek out her mother’s help in order to get it right. Given their

strained relationship, this was a rare, but important moment in which her mother shared the role of principle, pushing Marie to capture an accurate rendition of this experience instead of trying to shelter the audience. In many ways, then, the roles and activities surrounding this performance were laminated, as Marie used this essay both to help her get into college and to reconnect with her mother.

This connection to home resources also gave Marie recontextualization strategies that she could use to challenge the stereotypes she felt the college admissions counselors might hold. Explaining that she knew other refugees, like her recently incarcerated cousin, who used the war as an excuse for their mistakes, Marie expressed concern that admissions counselors would categorize her with this group: “College sometimes will feel like, ‘Oh, they were in a war. The person's good, but we have to keep an eye on them because they might like do something wrong’” (personal communication, June 18, 2014). In response to these concerns, Marie constructed a performance that would challenge these potential misconceptions. Acknowledging the risks behind the graphic descriptions she’d included, she offered this explanation of why she wanted to include the scene her mother had suggested:

I feel like it’s good to let all of the things that I’m holding in, let it out, so they know where I’m from. Like I’m struggling, but I still want to continue my education ‘cause some people, you know, when they come out of the war like me, they either tend to do bad stuff because of the influence of the war, but I want to show that even though this happened that I’m still a good person, no matter what, so I want to focus on my education. (personal communication, July 31, 2013)

This conversation seemed to have given Marie the courage to “let it out,” a decision that contrasted significantly with her choice to avoid discussing her mother or environment in fear of stereotyping. Instead, she included this risky information, strategically using graphic details within the first half to contrast the hope she found from books at the refugee camp and the promise she saw in a college education. This before and after structure supported the narrative turn she made in the conclusion, where she highlighted her ability to overcome

obstacles and presented education as the antidote to her past trauma. This turn helped her to challenge stereotypes by showing that, despite past trauma, she could still do something valuable with her life.

In order to determine the effectiveness of her recontextualization, Marie used entextualization strategies, using interactions with readers to guide her strategies. For instance, she reported asking her tutor mentors at UB what they thought of the violence in her piece and recalled this response: “When they read it, they’re like, ‘Oh wow, you brought it to our attention, and you bring it out, and you made us feel like we were there when it happened to you’” (Personal Interview, 7/14/2013). Instead of being put off, then, her tutors affirmed the importance of the topic and the power of her rendition. Based on this response, she decided not to remove any of the graphic elements from her story.

In addition to using graphic material to challenge stereotypes, build interest, and gain sympathy, Marie incorporated sensory detail to create immediacy, and give her readers “a picture in their heads to see how it is for a child who needs education” (personal communication, July 2, 2013). In many ways, creating this picture for the reader allowed Marie to tap into preferred modalities that she had honed through her personal literacy practices. Canagarajah (2012) argued that “language and semiotic resources make meaning in the context of diverse modalities working together, including oral and written modalities,” and this interplay helped Marie translate her thoughts into words (p. 7). Frequently describing herself as a visual person, Marie identified “pictures” as an important resource for her learning and writing on her literacy map (see Appendix G) and indicated that visuals helped her to overcome comprehension problems posed by her limited academic vocabulary. She also felt that visualization was tied into the writing she did at home. Inspired by her life experiences and rhythms from music videos on YouTube, she had been composing a

songbook and would later recall this background helped her to create a more vivid college admissions essay:

S: Do your songs ever influence the writing that you do for school?

M: I'm pretty sure no, I don't think so, no wait, yeah. The one that has to do with personal, if it has to do with my father or the war or stuff like that, then I'm pretty sure it does because the common app., of course, it has to do with the war; it has to do with my father too so

S: And how does your song writing influence that?

M: Well, basically when I'm writing I see it like what's happening—even though it's not happening really. I'm seeing that it's like, if I'm writing a song down it's like this is the way I want the words to go, then my dad would be here and I'll be here, but I'll be seeing it, and people look at me sometimes like why are you smiling, and I'm like, I'm just looking at something and then, yeah. (Personal Interview, October 6, 2014)

As indicated here, Marie's songwriting seemed to be a way for her to reconnect with her father through a process of visualization. Although most school writing did not allow her to tap into these resources, crafting her college admissions essay became a multimodal experience. Listening to music evoked images of her past, and this process of visualization, in turn, helped her to pick the right words to express her ideas in a linguistic mode.

One of the reasons why Marie was able to draw upon these multiple modalities was that her teacher, Jennifer, used visualization as a planning activity, asking the students to use sketches to recall details and organize ideas for their essays. Marie's sketch included a gun dripping with blood, flames engulfing a hut, stick figures laying on the ground, and a lake surrounded by trees, images which would later become the major scenes in her essay (field notes, July 8, 2013). Although Marie was already visualizing these events, she indicated that actually putting these images down on paper helped her to organize ideas and recall forgotten details.

Being in a classroom that validated her home language also seemed to help Marie immerse her reader in this experience. Jennifer encouraged bilingual students in the class to use their native language as a resource even though this practice seemed unorthodox to her:

“I know that it’s kind of looked down upon, but for students who are so new and so emergent in their language usage, I feel like it’s doing them a disservice to say not to use their own language, and I feel like it’s kind of disrespectful to them” (personal communication, August 14, 2013). Despite the prevailing “English Only” sentiments she’d previously encountered, when faced with the large bilingual population in UB, Jennifer decided to challenge this position. Like many bilingual students who find it easiest to write in the language in which their memories are stored (Friedlander, 1990), Marie reported that it was helpful to mentally plan out her essay in French then translate to English. Although she did most of the actual writing in English, she decided to leave in some French dialogue, explaining, “I also have to put the French words there cause that’s how they said it, so I cannot put it in English ‘cause they didn’t say any English, so I could not put that” (personal communication, July 18, 2013). Drawing upon interactional strategies to pair her linguistic resources with those of her readers, Marie ultimately decided to place French phrases alongside English translations: “Out we stand seeing neighbors running, children crying, rebels shouting ‘bruler la maison,’ which means burn the house,” and “‘executer lorsque les rebelles se rapprochent,’ which means run when the rebels come close.” By blending in her preferred semiotic and linguistic resources Marie felt she had captured vivid portrait she hoped to create.

Despite Marie’s eagerness to share her narrative, she initially resisted packaging her experiences to fit the demands of the Common Application. Jennifer had advised the students not to worry about the 650 word limit in the first draft, and Marie started out with 1000, which caused some of her classmates to tease that she’d written a book. Cutting it down was overwhelming, and Marie frequently complained to me about the length restrictions. During a conference with Jennifer, this frustration came to a head. Marie did not want to make any cuts, and visibly upset, wondered aloud if she should just start over with a new topic. Jennifer encouraged her to stick with this story, which she saw as “vital to you becoming who you

are” (field notes, July 18, 2013). Instead, of starting over Jennifer advised Marie to keep a copy of the original draft for herself and then create a new file where she could make changes. Rather than telling her what to cut, Jennifer helped her to balance her own agency as a writer with the demands of the institutional audience. She pointed out the parts that seemed most significant to her as a reader, and closed the conference by reminding Marie that it was her story and she could chose whether or not to use the suggestions

This encounter seemed to be a turning point in the revision process, and when I met Marie for an interview a week later, she had worked with peers and tutors during her study periods to shorten her essay to 674 words. At that time, she explained why she had found it so upsetting to alter her original account:

S: I remember when you were talking to Jennifer about cutting some words like it seemed really intimidating and kind of upsetting to you. How do you feel about the words that you cut? Was it difficult to do or upsetting?

M: It was ‘cause I want people to have the picture in their head of what’s going on and not just get like oh, they kill people or someone died, you know. I want them to see how, have the picture like the person was laying on the ground dead this way, blood was coming from them, have them be like, “Oh wow, I can see what’s actually happening.” Like when I was in the story, I saw basically. I didn’t see the picture but it was like almost like it was right in front of me, and I could lay out everything where it was, so that’s how I did it; I did it like my picture memory (personal communication, July 31, 2013).

Marie felt it was very important to stay true to her “picture memory”; she wanted her reader to bear witness to the traumas of war rather than just having a passive understanding of what she had experienced. The format of the college admissions essay was restrictive to capturing this vision, and through entextualization strategies, Marie and her readers at UB could negotiate which details were most essential for her story.

The success of these negotiations was evident in the positive feedback she received, her sense of competence, and the sincerity of her performance. Because Marie turned in the essay at the end of the summer program so that she could make additional revisions, she did not get any written feedback from Jennifer. However, she received an “A” for the course,

which was largely based on the admissions essay, and Jennifer frequently told me how moved she was by Marie's essay. Between the start and close of the summer program, Marie's self-confidence scales (see Appendix D) for the college admissions essay rose three points. Unlike Jared, Marie's essay received affirmation from high school teachers and her UB advisor, causing her to give herself the highest rating, a ten, by the end of the school year. Likewise, she indicated that the college admissions essay was her favorite piece of writing from Senior Seminar because "it shows me. How many words I was supposed to use, I was very careful. First, I went to 1000. Then I brought it down to 900, 600, I was just going down, and I expressed myself. It's usually good for people to express themselves instead of going out and putting their frustration on another person (personal communication, 7/31/13). Despite the challenges of writing an emotional story, avoiding potential stereotypes, and meeting length restrictions, Marie delivered a performance that she felt captured her sense of self and helped her release pain. In large part, this success seemed to emanate from the opportunity to test out her performance in a low-risk environment. Marie's readers in Senior Seminar offered the reassurance and guidance she needed to craft her story into an effective college admissions essay, and her mother supported her need to present an authentic narrative that challenged her college admissions counselors to have a more accurate understanding of the war and its survivors.

Exoticized Performances

Unlike the supportive, low-risk environment in which she wrote her college admissions essay, Marie found the situation surrounding the scholarship essays she wrote to be a high-stakes, isolating endeavor. A combination of familial and institutional factors contributed this situation. Over the school year, her relationship with her mother became increasingly strained when Marie found out that she was not a U.S. citizen. As a result, when applying to college, Marie faced a series of extra bureaucratic hurdles that made her

admissions process much more taxing and time consuming. Additionally, midway through the school year her mother cut off all communication, making it hard for Marie to apply for financial aid. Because she did not have access to her guardianship papers or know whose income taxes to report, Marie needed to file as an independent, a complex and drawn out process in which she often got conflicting advice from different financial aid counselors. Discussing these challenges, Marie often tearfully reported that she wasn't sure she would make it into college, and Susan, her UB advisor noted that "most students would have given up and thrown in the towel" (personal communication, May 15, 2014). Uncertain that she would be able to get financial aid and unable to pay on her own, Marie thought scholarships might be her only way into college.

While she had Susan to help her navigate the financial aid process, Marie was largely on her own to complete scholarship applications. At her high school guidance center, Marie reported that counselors were often too busy to meet with her and generally directed her to two plastic bins filled with scholarship applications. Similarly, Susan showed her a large database of scholarships. However, Marie was not always certain if she was eligible to apply for these scholarships, particularly because she was not a U.S. citizen. Most of the scholarships required essays, and Marie frequently reported that she found the wording of the prompts difficult to decipher. In general, she had a very vague definition of the situation, noting, "I really don't know what they're looking for. I just feel like they must be tired of reading I guess" (Personal Interview, 2/13/14). Although I offered to help her with the applications, Marie's work schedule, extracurricular activities, family responsibilities, and regular school demands made it hard for her meet with me. Often times, she learned about scholarships the week or even the day that they were due, leaving little time for her to get extensive feedback from me or anyone else. Sometimes, she tried to get help with her essays at the UB Saturday tutorials, but did not find the tutors' feedback effective. Explaining her

need for more encouragement from these tutors, she suggested, “Maybe if they’d let you know you’re the top, you’re probably going to win, but I’m just filling them out, filling them out, doesn’t look like I am going to win” (personal communication, February 13, 2014).

Unlike the extensive responses she received over the summer, these short interactions did not allow her to determine the uptake of her performance. Facing these constraints while writing scholarship essays, Marie had limited options for negotiating the demands of her audience.

Equally troubling was the type of performance Marie felt obliged to give in her scholarship essays. The first indication of a problem occurred when Marie addressed this issue in the focus group:

- Marie: Writing has not done anything for me. I just think it just explains too much about my life that I’m not ready to share yet.
- Shauna: So, you feel like, Marie, with writing that you have been asked to share too much that you don’t really want to?
- Marie: Well, basically with a lot of scholarships. They always ask you a lot of stuff.
- Ariel: Personal?
- Marie: Why all this personal stuff. First, give me the money, then I’ll tell you my personal life.
- Ariel: I think they always look at your story and are like, “Oh she does deserve this, she actually does need this money” rather than the next person is like, “My parents spoil me.”
- Gabrielle: But I feel like teachers should recommend you rather than you write it
- Ariel: It’s not like they want you to tell them about your personal life.
- Gabrielle: But how about if you’re lying. How about if you just don’t tell them.
- Marie: [Laughing] Yeah, ‘cause I’m a pretty good storyteller (focus group, May 13, 2014).

In this interaction, Marie and Ariel reflected a certain ambivalence towards discussing their personal and financial hardships in scholarship essays. While both seemed to find these revelations too personal, as Ariel indicated, they allowed them to stand out from their more privileged peers and effectively play the role of “needy student.” Marie seemed particularly frustrated because she saw this mandatory self-disclosure as a sort of paid performance in which the spectators had not yet compensated her for the show. Marie demonstrated a cynical

stance towards this compulsory role, when Gabrielle suggested that teachers act as mediators in this performance. Trying here to reclaim a more empowering position, Marie even suggested her own power to potentially manipulate the audience with her skills as a performer.

When I had the opportunity to follow up with Marie in a personal interview, she went into more detail about why she found scholarship essays too self-revelatory. In particular, she felt uncomfortable responding to a particular question that, in some variation, reappeared on several scholarship applications: “Describe personal or family circumstances that make it necessary for you to seek aid for education” ([Community College] Scholarship Application). Responding to these questions (see Figure 6.5), Marie engaged in the same kind of “negative idealization” as Jared, conforming to her readers’ expectations for stereotypical displays of poverty in needs-based scholarship essays. For instance, she highlighted her lack of insurance, family conflicts, and difficulty covering necessary expenses. While Marie did actually face these financial hardships, she disliked putting them on display, noting, “I just didn’t like talking about it because I don’t like when people feel pity” (personal communication, June 18, 2013). Although she made a move to highlight her responsibility and extracurricular involvement, the main focus of the essay was still personal and financial hardship rather than her resiliency. Unlike conclusion of her college admissions in which she used a narrative turn to highlight her ability to overcome obstacles, this scholarship essay ended on a more pessimistic note, challenging this discourse of self-determination by stating, “Life is hard, and sometimes, the harder you work, the more struggle comes your way.” Within this shift, Marie moved from the empowering role of hero to the disempowering victim of circumstance. The participants’ reactions towards these performances support Goffman’s (1959) claim that “negative idealization” only occurs when individuals feel forced to display a lower position than they accept for themselves (p. 38). However, while his work

has taken a rather neutral stance towards this social phenomenon, these case studies illustrate how disruptive these performances can be.

Figure 6.5. Marie's [community college] scholarship essay

When we came to America, my mother changed from being a loving and caring mother to I want you guys to move to [the Northeast] to your aunt. I am not mad, curious in why she wants to send my brother and I away. It was difficult leaving my mother because we went through a lot coming from the war and losing my father. My auntie agreed that we can live with her but, she can not be responsible for our being because she also has her family to take care of. I was happy, but shatter of becoming grown to find a job to take care of my brother. I volunteer at the [middle school] my freshman year of high school. This give me chances to get to know the students and help them with situations such as homework, family, and being that helping hand that is hard to find. My Sophomore year I started processing my paperwork for a job at the [middle school's] 21st Century Program. I got the job and started working from three p.m. to five p.m. my schedule is not stable because I have activities like Student Councils, FBLA-Future Business Leaders of America, and Key Club. I kept in contact with my mom, when having a conversation I always asked when will we be together but it seems that she has made up her mind that we will never be together as family. I also asked if my brother and I have insurance.

“Sad to say, but I got rid of your insurance since eighth grade. If you want find a job. That your choice” she responded. From that point on I knew that my brother is looking up to me for guardianship and comfort. With the money I made I budgeted how to save them. My schedule varies because I have school work, sports, clubs, and my little brother to take care of. From my paycheck I take twenty dollars off for our college. Then the rest I divide it and give some to my brother for bus or taxi. For my share I go to Dollar Tree and get snacks and school supplies for us. There's usually ten or twenty dollar left. I use that remaining money to buy the grocery. Life is hard, and sometimes, the harder you work, the more struggle comes your way. By allowing me to focus on service and education rather than financial barriers, this scholarship will help me follow the example of personal excellence that other leaders have impacted on me.

Despite the initial cynicism Marie expressed in response to being exoticized, much like Jared, her stance towards this performance followed the “cycle of disbelief-to-belief” (Goffman, 1959, p.20). Between the time of the focus group and our last interview, her financial aid package had come through, and she had won \$8,000 worth of scholarships. These financial incentives seemed to have shifted her stance. When I later asked if she thought it was wrong for scholarship applications to ask about family circumstances, she

indicated, “No, because it's going to help them understand who needs more help because someone else can just write big words describing themselves and then they can probably have more money than I do, and when they ask you to explain your background, then it tells where you're coming from and like you need help” (personal communication, June 18, 2014).

Unlike her earlier suggestion that she could potentially manipulate the audience by spinning a good story, here Marie reaffirmed the importance of delivering a sincere performance to let the audience know who really needed help. As her sense of competence with this performance increased, so did her belief, and in response to material gain and power differentials, Marie was willing to accept stereotypical roles.

These shifts in Marie’s account add nuance to the difference-as-resource model, which has presented an overly optimistic view of students’ attitudes towards their cultural and linguistic differences. For instance, Canagarajah (2002), has argued that diverse students typically want to display their “linguistic and cultural peculiarities” within their writing. However, as Marie’s account illustrates, she had a more mixed response to displaying these differences. While the college admissions essay was painful to write and ran the risk of exoticizing her with its graphic details, having opportunities for sustained negotiations allowed her to avoid feeling stereotyped and to present herself in a way she found empowering. As pressure mounted and support dwindled, negotiation ceased, and Marie found it necessary to deliver the performance she felt readers’ would value, even if these roles were disempowering. This definition of the situation was affirmed by her audience, who gave her the financial resources she needed to advance socially and economically. Such incentives increased her willingness to accept roles she might otherwise have rejected.

In many ways, Marie’s reactions also complicate Jordan’s (2009; 2012) assertion that the diverse topoi within multilingual students’ writings raise readers’ awareness about global issues and challenge stereotypes. At times, her writing did, indeed, give readers a more

accurate perspective on political conflicts in West Africa. However, as Marie had feared, her writing also ran the risk of reinforcing stereotypes that presented refugees as vulnerable and emotionally damaged. In this sense, Marie's account complements Vidali's (2007) findings that students' decisions to self-disclose their disabilities presented significant risks and benefits. Like these students, differences in Marie's cultural and socio-economic background allowed her to stand out, gain audience's sympathy, and reap material and social rewards. At the same time, they ran the risk of reinforcing stereotypes. Walking the fine line between these risks and benefits was a challenge that Marie had to negotiate throughout the admissions process.

Discussion

These case studies draw much needed attention to the dimensions of power that are missing in Goffman's performance theory and contradict the idealism of translanguaging. Unlike the more direct, face-to-face encounters these frameworks have typically explored, the high-stakes purposes and dispersed audiences these participants encountered diffused the definition of the situation and limited opportunities for negotiation. Goffman (1959), for instance, focused on situations in which performers could directly gauge their audiences' reactions and adjust their act accordingly, yet Jared and Marie faced the much more difficult task of predicting uptake based on divergent responses from intermediaries. This lack of direct and sustained interaction likewise complicated Canagarajah's (2012) concept of performative competence, which is based on writers' abilities to adjust their negotiation strategies across time and space in response to their audience's reactions.

While competent in negotiating their teacher's and tutors' uptake, Jared and Marie only had one, high-stakes opportunity to interact with the college admissions officers and scholarship committees. Therefore, this situation seemed to call for a sort of *predictive competence*, an ability to imagine how unknown audiences will respond to negotiation

strategies. Early & DeCosta (2012) and Warren (2013) have begun to illustrate how teachers might help students develop this predictive competence by developing a college admissions essay workshop for underserved students that helped them identify key features of the genre and analyze their audiences' values. By giving students a clearer definition of the situation than what is typically available in how-to guides, such approaches can help them predict the uptake of their negotiation strategies. Still, as Marie's account illustrates, students need help in applying these skills to other gatekeeping genres, such as scholarship essays.

Additionally, prediction alone is not enough as the dimensions of power and the material realities surrounding the admissions essay can further constrict possibilities for negotiation. Canagarajah (2012) has maintained that negotiation strategies naturally emerge from cross-cultural contact in everyday encounters. Careful to point out that issues of power and dominance remain important considerations, he has emphasized that, through collaboration, those in power can be persuaded to accept cultural and linguistic differences (p. 182). Still, when faced with these issues of power, many teachers may revert to the difference-as-deficit model, encouraging students like Jared and Marie to conform to what institutional audiences seem to want or expect. Indeed, the growing push for "college readiness" in recent reform movements like the Common Core Standards present this unilateral model as the ultimate goal of a high school education. While the current emphasis has been on preparing culturally and linguistically diverse students for the university, equal attention needs to be paid to preparing the university to work with these populations. Otherwise, the issues of power and access that exclude these students are maintained, and their agency as writers is constricted.

High school writing teachers who want to challenge difference-as-deficit models and encourage multilingual students' agency can teach the conventions of academic writing while also identifying possibilities for resistance. With enough teachers and students offering

resistance, disempowering conventions can begin to change. College writing teachers and administrators can accelerate this transformation by expanding their definitions of “college-readiness” and shifting towards a model that offers more room for negotiation. Such a shift would allow teachers to reconsider the value in stories like Jared’s rather than simply dismissing them as trite or hackneyed. It would also encourage teachers to critically examine the appeal of “exotic” stories like Marie’s, and help students balance the costs and benefits of behind these performances. Moving forward, I highlight how findings from this study provide educators within pre-college outreach programs, high schools, and first-year writing classrooms with a better understanding how cultural and institutional identities affect students’ academic writing. I conclude by exploring the types of institutional policies, material conditions, and writing practices that can facilitate more positive identity negotiations and support students’ transitions.

Chapter VII

New Avenues for Access and Success: An Integrated System for Supporting First-Generation College Students

The educational system, no matter how well intentioned, will not adequately provide the resources that low-income, underrepresented, high-needs students require. The system is just not built to do that. Programs focused on providing additional or supplementary support services to disadvantaged students can fill these gaps where the system fails. These programs are, for lack of a better term, the finger the dike component of our educational system. (Swail, 2000, p. 88).

The findings from these five longitudinal case studies have highlighted the pivotal role that pre-college outreach programs can play in preventing first-generation college students from being inundated by educational and social inequities. Despite their resiliency and drive, these participants all faced significant information, economic, and academic barriers that, at many times, threatened to set their educational goals adrift. As illustrated by the participants' personal and school profiles, all came from single-parent, low-income households and attended resource-poor schools. Most also came from homes where a language other than English was spoken, which could make it even more difficult to get help with homework or college planning. The preceding two chapters have provided an analysis of the ways in which the Upward Bound summer program filled in some of these gaps.

At the same time, as Swail (2000) has observed, pre-college outreach programs' sustainability and broader impact remain tenuous at best. Indeed, as the phrase "fingers in the dike" suggests, for every student these programs help, countless others are left to sink or swim. Rather than dismantling a compromised educational structure, these programs reflect a

somewhat piecemeal approach to promoting college access and success for underrepresented populations. As the previous chapters have illustrated, these case study participants represent the lucky few who both elected and were chosen to participate in the summer program. All of the participants provided accounts of eligible students being turned down from the program or failing to complete the admissions process. Both Gabrielle and Savannah had even initially been excluded from the summer program, which, as these findings have suggested, remains a core component of UB. Currently, only 10% of the eligible population participates in a TRIO program, a number that will likely dwindle since UB continues to lose significant amounts of funding (\$38,977,247 from 2011 to 2013 alone) (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2014).

Furthermore, national surveys have indicated that over 2/3 of the students who do enroll in these programs eventually drop out (Nozaki & Shireman, 2001). The limited access to this intervention presents the first limitation to this “finger in the dike” approach.

Additionally, while maintaining a presence within the high schools, UB was never fully integrated, which posed both opportunities and limitations. Neither strictly within nor completely outside of traditional academic institutions, pre-college outreach programs like UB create a hybrid space that can foster new identities and literacies. In addition to creating a hybrid space, UB presents a liminal sense of time by linking high school and college preparation. Participants, then, remain betwixt and between high school and college, an in-school and out-of school program. As such, this study provides a unique perspective on how time and space impact the intersections between identity, literacy, and college access.

A few other studies within second-language writing and English Education have highlighted the affordances liminal spaces offer for studying the intersections between literacy and identity. Severino, Gilchrist, and Rainey (2010), for instance, have shown how the liminality of college writing centers can encourage multilingual students to explore identities as creative writers by removing the pressures of evaluation and providing students’

with personalized instruction. Similarly, Campano (2007), Lam (2000), and Canagrajah (2004) have articulated the concept of a “second classroom” or “third space” to refer to places and practices that lie on the margins of traditional schooling. They argue that these hybrid times and spaces provide students’ with a safe context to explore literacy practices that promote their individual interests and cultural backgrounds.

Students are not the only ones to benefit from these hybrid or liminal spaces. Sunstein (1994) reported similar findings within her ethnography of the New Hampshire Literacy Institutes, a professional development opportunity offered during the summer that supports in-service teachers’ writing and inquiry. By creating a time and space for teachers to become active writers and researchers, the Literacy Institutes helped them develop professional identities that were simultaneously related to and yet distinct from their traditional role in the classroom. The current study extends this important body of research by showing how pre-college outreach programs create a safe space for underrepresented students to develop pro-academic identities, writing practices, and affiliations. In chapter 5, for instance, I analyzed how high expectations and levels of support within mixed ability classes at UB increased participants’ investment and sense of competency as writers. Similarly, chapter 6 pointed to the ways in which individualized instruction and culturally-inclusive practices within Senior Seminar increased diverse students’ agency and resources for writing.

However, alongside the benefits of this liminality lie the drawbacks. Positioned at a transitional point between high school and college, UB is not designed to provide the type of long-term support that would dramatically alter student’s academic literacy development or their educational trajectories. This point was, perhaps, most dramatically illustrated as participants struggled with the reading and writing practices they needed to advance to higher-level courses within their school despite the help they received in UB. As a result, they were often positioned in courses that were too easy or difficult, causing them to lose

their investment in learning. As these findings suggest, developing academic literacies takes more time than can be provided within a few six-week courses. Such outcomes also show that if the same types of supports and opportunities are not extended to participants' high school and college classrooms, the UB summer program cannot have a sustainable impact. Rather, it presents a temporary disruption in their educational trajectories. Likewise, cultural connections can turn into conflicts when they become resources for agency in one setting but are rejected or exoticized in others. In other words, it is not enough to relegate cultural identities and literacies to a liminal space. They have to have a place within the larger educational system. In what follows, I will highlight the implications of this study for pre-college outreach programs, policy makers, high school language arts teachers, First-Year Composition instructors and administrators, and translingual scholars. Based on these implications, I will also recommend practices and areas of future research that can move beyond the fingers in the-dike approach to creating the type of systematic change that can promote access to the academic literacies underserved students need to enter and be successful within a postsecondary institution.

Implications for Pre-College Outreach Programs

As discussed in chapter 1, pre-college outreach programs present multiple models, durations, services, and locations. Yet, the limited amount of data collected by researchers and program administrators make it difficult to determine which delivery models are most effective. While this study has started to address these gaps, much remains to be learned. Because recommendations for program design cannot be reasonably based on the experiences of five participants, the primary implication of this study for pre-college outreach program points to the need for further research.

To date, local and national profiles of UB programs have gathered data on the characteristics of program grantees and their participants, including demographics, levels of

participation, G.P.A.s, standardized test scores, postsecondary enrollment, and retention. While important, this data does little to help administrators direct more resources towards the most effective components or to improve the less effective ones. For instance, while the participants in this study demonstrated positive outcomes within the summer residential program, results were mixed during the academic-year. Living on campus during the summer temporarily suspended economic hardships and the demands of employment, household duties, and extracurricular activities. However, once the school year resumed, participants had multiple demands on their time, energy, and attention that conflicted with program elements.

Additionally, participants saw the services offered during the academic year as ancillary rather than integral to their school work. Consequently, they did not find the tutoring or advising helpful for completing homework or selecting appropriate courses. For some, these disconnects during the school year seemed to diminish investment in the summer program as well. Together, these trends attenuated the program's impact on students' literacy development and college access by limiting opportunities to participate and succeed in more rigorous coursework. Despite the value of these insights, this study cannot address whether these findings extended across this particular program or other sites. Large-scale survey data could begin to close these gaps and help administrators to both strengthen the program and decrease attrition.

While program assessments might improve individual components, creating contrastive case studies could identify successful elements to incorporate across models. As previously mentioned, the liminality of UB posed both benefits and limitations. While UB recruited participants from the high schools, had access to their educational records, and interacted with their counselors and administrators, the program's impact within the high school was still minimal. In fact, the high school English teachers I spoke with had no contact

with the UB program. These gap prevents teachers from building upon students' experiences in pre-college outreach programs. Other pre-college outreach programs—such as AVID, IHAD, and GEAR-UP—have a more direct impact on their participants' schools. GEAR-UP, for instance, targets an entire cohort of seventh grade students within high-poverty middle schools. Following these students all the way through their first year of college, the program provides leadership, resources, and professional development opportunities that create a college-going culture within their secondary schools.

Additionally, while the safe, low-stakes environment within the UB summer program encouraged participants to draw on their cultural and linguistic resources, culturally-inclusive instruction was not an official component of the UB model. California's Puente project, on the other hand, has established culturally-inclusive instruction as one of its core tenants and trains teachers to use ethnographic research to develop curriculum that meets students' unique needs, interests, and backgrounds. As suggested by chapters 5 & 6, participants could have benefitted from a service model that created a college-going, culturally-responsive climate within their schools. Still, neither GEAR-UP nor Puente provide opportunities for participants to experience a six-week residential program on a college campus, which was an important program component for these case study participants. Multiple case studies could be designed to compare these different program models and determine the impact of elements such as culturally-inclusive instruction, cohort-based approaches, school reform, and residential programs. Such information would allow programs to direct funds to the most critical components and incorporate successful elements from different service models.

Pre-college outreach programs have much to learn from one another. The types of research that I've described could provide some opportunities for cross-pollination. However, the directors and employees of these different programs need more opportunities for collaboration. While a few state conferences have started to address these needs, more

opportunities need to promote these conversations at a national level. Furthermore, given the limited access to these programs, policy makers, high school teachers, and FYC instructors and administrators need to identify ways to incorporate successful program elements into educational opportunities for all underserved students. To begin to address this need, I next consider what insights of pre-college outreach programs can offer for literacy reform movements.

Implications for Policy Makers

Hull & Scultz (2002) have expressed concern over “a great divide” in perspectives on in-school and out-of-school literacies. One side of this divide valorizes out-of-school literacies while villainizing in-school practices. The other side dismisses non-school learning as frivolous, unworthy of funding or public support. To address this impasse, they have called for literacy researchers and theories to “look for overlap or complementarity or perhaps a respectful division of labor” (p. 3). The liminality of pre-college outreach program has offered one means for pointing to potential overlaps. At the same time, I also acknowledge the current need for a respectful division of labor based on differences in institutional roles and resources.

This position resists the discourse of teacher blame that often permeates educational research, reform statements, and public discussions. At many times, the study participants, frustrated by conditions within their schools and classrooms, drew on such discourses to vent their concerns. Still, they also recognized and often commented on the differences in working conditions and resources between UB and the high schools. For instance, the participants frequently blamed their high school teachers for limited feedback and the disorderly conduct of peers. Significantly, they also cited large class sizes and teacher workloads as contributing to these problems within their schools. To render a more accurate and fair account of institutional differences, I have balanced these perspectives within my findings. However, I

wish to emphasize here the dramatic effect that material resources have on students' literacy development and educational trajectories. These case studies have highlighted the literate potential of all five participants. Unfortunately, this potential was often stunted in their resource-poor high schools, never having time to fully develop even once they experienced more equitable conditions in UB.

This is hardly a new observation. Such concerns have plagued literacy educators from the start of the 20th century. For instance, the very first article within *English Journal*, “Can Good Composition Teaching Be Done Under the Current Conditions,” illustrated the numerous constraints writing teachers faced in 1912. Though written over a century ago, the working conditions remain nearly identical to what teachers experience today. Faced with overcrowded classes, heavy paper loads, and limited support across the curriculum, English teachers were publicly ridiculed for poor student outcomes and labeled incompetent or uncommitted when they sought better conditions. To address such problems, the author—Edwin Hopkins—called for more effective publicity campaigns. Stepping into classrooms within the Riverview or Breckenridge school districts, such campaigns seem to have failed. Instead of improving material conditions in these and other under-resourced districts, current reforms have sought to standardize literacy instruction in order to ensure “college and career readiness.” In many ways, the philosophy behind such movements seems motivated by the perceived incompetence of instructors. Efforts to standardize the curriculum and establish stricter accountability measures suggest that teachers are incapable of identifying what students need to learn or of being trusted to ensure that outcomes are being met.

In fairness, some organizations and policy makers have admitted that standards alone cannot ensure equal opportunities for all students. For instance, within the introduction to their *Standards for the English Language Arts*, the NCTE/IRA (1996) has acknowledged that “if all students are to have equal opportunities to meet these standards, than all school must

have sufficient funds to hire well-qualified teachers and staff, to acquire high-quality instructional materials, and to purchase supplies such as books, paper, and desks. This means that states and communities must address the often serious funding inequities across school districts” (p. 6). Similarly, Diane Ravitch (1995), a leader in standards-based reforms, has pointed to three different types of standards:

- (1). Content Standards, what teachers are expected to teach and students to learn.
- (2). Performance Standards, “degrees of mastery or levels of attainment” (p. 12).
- (3). Opportunity to Learn Standards, “the availability of programs, staff, and other resources that schools, districts, and states provide so that students are able to meet challenging content and performance standards” (p.13).

However, even while pointing to the need for Opportunity to Learn Standards, Ravitch simultaneously undermines their importance by prioritizing Content and Performance Standards, noting that they should be put in place first. To some extent, this approach makes sense—having clear goals can aid in identifying the necessary resources. Unfortunately, leaving Opportunity to Learn Standards as an afterthought has traditionally meant that they remain forgotten or ignored.

The most recent reform movement, the Common Core Standards, is a perfect example, never once mentioning the material resources that might affect learning outcomes. Responding to such oversights, Taubman (2009) has claimed that standards movements exacerbate rather than alleviate inequity by masking contextual differences, resource disparities, and power differentials. When these factors are ignored, blame for unequal levels of performance is cast on schools, teachers, students, and parents. Under this system, the limited resources for public education are also diverted to private corporations instead of the underserved students who so desperately need them. Rather than promoting “college readiness,” then, literacy standards may be masking the need for material resources and

additional services that could help underserved students enroll and succeed in a postsecondary institution. By following five participants across institutional contexts with markedly different material conditions, this study offers a powerful counterargument to policy makers' emphasis on standards and accountability. The differences in outcomes between the UB summer program and the high schools suggest that resources not only matter but are critical in promoting literacy development and college access.

Policy makers are not the only ones to respond to diversity with standardization. High school administrators and teachers often take a similar approach. At first glance, Riverview and Breckenridge's practice of tracking students into courses with varying levels of difficulty seems like an effort to meet students' differing needs and abilities. However, the categories of ability represented by these tracks lacked nuance and were too broad to be useful. None of the participants found that tracking met their individualized needs. Similarly, the rather lockstep writing process the participants experienced within their high school classrooms seemed to emanate from not having sufficient resources to individualize instruction for diverse learners. The alternative, then, was to make writing instruction more efficient by establishing a simplified procedure that could be repeated across students and their writing tasks. For this reason, conferences in Ariel's Creative Writing course followed a set pattern in which students brainstormed a list of topics, shared the list with the teacher, and were told which topic would work best. Similarly, Gabrielle was forced to use the thesis and writing process her ESL teacher had established, even though these practices did not reflect her own efforts to make meaning. Understandably, the participants complained that this type of writing instruction failed to engage their creativity or critical thinking.

While I maintain that adequate resources are necessary to close current achievement gaps, they are unlikely to be immediately forthcoming. In the meantime, teachers need to identify strategies to support students with existing resources. On the one hand, this

response runs the risk of maintaining the status quo and obviating the exigency for equal funding. On the other, the alternative of leaving students underprepared for the rigors of college remains unacceptable. Without the resources available within UB, how might high school English teachers offer the type of personalized attention that can help all students identify themselves as writers? How can they honor students' individual backgrounds, interests, goals, and learning styles without the luxury of extended conferences or course tutors? In the section that follows, I point to ways in which implications from this study can answer Hull & Schultz's call to bridge out-of-school literacies with classroom practice by helping high school language arts teachers tap into insights from UB.

Implications for High School Teachers and Administrators

A sense of audience—the knowledge that someone will read what they have written—is crucial for young writers. Kids write with purpose and passion when they know that people they care about reaching will read what they have to say (Atwell, 1998, p.).

In addition to extensive feedback and individualized attention from their teachers and tutors, study participants reported greater investment in writing they did for Senior Seminar because they experienced a sense of authenticity and agency. Purcell-Gates, Duke, & Martineau (2007) have described authentic reading and writing tasks as serving communicative purposes, such as reading for information that one wants or needs to know or writing to provide information for someone who wants or needs it (p. 14). As described within the previous two chapters, both of the main writing assignments in the UB Senior Seminar class met these criteria. For the first assignment, the college admissions essay, students wrote about the personal experiences and characteristics readers needed to know in order to make decisions regarding admissions. The second assignment, a compare-contrast essay, gave students the opportunity to research the information they needed in order to

choose a college and share this information with peers in a class presentation. All of the reading and writing in this course, then, centered on the authentic purpose of gathering and sharing information that would help students meet their goal of attending college. In response, participants frequently noted that they spent more time writing and revising their work in UB than in high school because it counted for more than just a grade on an individual assignment.

The benefits of authentic learning and writing activities have been long documented. Both James (1899) and Thorndike (1932) have observed that learning cannot occur without tangible consequences. Likewise, Eccles (1983) has argued that the importance and interest students associate with a task affects their achievement. Because authentic writing tasks provide feedback in the form of very real consequences, they tend to increase students' motivation and levels of achievement. Authentic writing activities have also been shown to improve audience and genre awareness. While school writing often does not address the real needs of a reader or writer, authentic writing compels students to consider these factors in selecting a genre and incorporating appropriate features. Purcell-Gates et al. (2007), for instance, designed a comparative study with elementary school students in which they wrote both a school-based assignment to exhibit what they had learned about pond life and an authentic assignment in which they prepared a brochure to educate visitors at a local nature center. The authors concluded that authentic reading and writing activities had a greater effect on students' effective use of genre features than explicit instruction, even when considering factors such as parental levels of education.

In a similar comparative study, Cohen & Riel (1989) found that students wrote more effective compositions to an overseas pen pal than in their formal classroom assessments. Because students already shared background knowledge with their teachers, it was difficult to incorporate the appropriate tone and content that teachers expect to see in formal writing

addressed to a generalized audience. However, with the letters, students had to identify the gaps in their audience's knowledge, an awareness that helped them develop more coherent texts. The current study adds to these findings by showing how participants interpreted situational cues surrounding authentic writing tasks to better understand their audience and purpose for writing. It also showed how writing tasks that are tied to students' future goals can potentially increase their investment.

In addition to the college-based curriculum in UB, several other teachers have illustrated how classrooms can incorporate authentic writing opportunities. For instance, both Putnam (2001) and Gilbert (2001) created community-based writing projects in which students wrote profiles and feature articles for web-based anthologies, local newspapers, and town archives. Both have noted that, teachers wanting to provide authentic writing opportunities should collaborate with both the school and local community in order to secure funding, support, and a readership for these projects. Other practical tips for incorporating authentic writing have centered on project design. Applying his concept of “backwards design” to authentic writing, Wiggins (2009) has suggested that teachers first identify purposes and audiences for writing in the real world. Once this is done, can then move backwards to design prompts and activities that can meet these long-term accomplishments. UB followed this approach, identifying the desired outcome—enrolling in college—along with the competencies students' needed to develop to achieve them. This program, then, adds a valuable model for designing authentic writing tasks that support underserved students' college access.

However, in order to truly engage student writers, this sense of authenticity needs to be paired with greater agency. As I illustrated in chapter 5, authentic writing does not automatically lead to greater investment if students have minimal control over the resources they use, content they include, and identities they construct. In Senior Seminar, Jared and

Marie became invested in their admissions essays because they could draw on their preferred resources and identities. However, they lost their investment and sense of competence when capitulating to the real or anticipated demands of teachers, advisors, and administrators. Such findings suggest that the most effective authentic writing tasks marshal students' interests and backgrounds. Indeed, the National Commission of Writing's large-scale survey of adolescent writing practices reported that "a key theme in what students said motivated them to write was one of 'relevance.' Teens said in varying ways that they wanted to be doing things that mattered to them socially, in their own lives" (Lenhart, Arafeh, Smith, & Macgill, 2008, p.57-8). In designing projects that have both relevance and impact, then, teachers need to understand what is meaningful to students, a difficult feat in the depersonalized and overcrowded classrooms in Riverview, Breckenridge, and countless other school districts.

While challenging, teachers can draw on several strategies to gather the type of information about students' backgrounds and interests that facilitates both agency and authenticity. Ortmeier-Hooper (2013), for instance, has suggested that teachers use students' literacy resource maps (much like the one used in this study) to design writing assignments that build on their expertise and interests. Similarly, Curwood, Magnifico, and Lammars (2013) have reasoned that, since many adolescents are already participating in authentic writing activities via online spaces, teachers can survey students about these experiences to construct more engaging writing activities. In UB, teachers could design writing tasks that supported students' shared goal to attend college, and these data collection tools can help teachers identify other common interests among their students.

Furthermore, teachers and real-world audiences are not the only valuable source of feedback. Peers can also provide a sense of audience. For the most part, participants in this study reported a greater quantity and quality of peer feedback in UB. In contrast, they complained of minimal and often unsatisfactory experiences with peer workshops in the high

schools. Some attributed this phenomena to reciprocal influences between teachers and students. High school teachers avoided peer workshops because uncooperative student behavior made them unproductive. However, this lack of experience also prevented students from learning to offer more effective feedback. The students who found peer feedback in UB most useful—Jared and Savannah—had also developed the greatest sense of trust and community within UB. On the other hand, Ariel, who found the feedback of her UB peers the least effective also reported a diminished sense of trust and community within the program. The perspectives of these five students offer a powerful reminder that writing is risky and requires trust in oneself and others. Helping students develop this sense of trust might be one area in which UB has the most to offer teachers and researchers who work in high school settings. It is noteworthy that four out of the five participants believed that the No Discount Policy fostered a stronger, if only temporary, peer community. This community, in turn, promoted a sense of safety that encouraged students to take social and academic risks, such as sharing personally revealing narratives with peers. High schools rarely pay enough attention to this type of community building. If anything, institutional policies, such as tracking, enhance divisions among students.

As I've noted in both this and the previous two chapters, UB and the high school have very different populations, missions, and resources. UB is able to provide small class sizes and adequate staffing to a selectively-admitted group of highly motivated students. High school, on the other hand, must stretch their resources to meet the needs of all students, even those who do not necessarily want to be there. As such, it is impossible to predict how the No Discount Policy would impact peer relations in the high school writing classroom. Many of the UB participants believed that such a policy could not work in their classroom. Existing research on the social dynamics surrounding peer feedback have observed that female and multilingual college students in mixed groups tended to speak less and get interrupted more

than males and native-English speaking students (Sommers & Lawrence, 1992; Zhu, 2001). However, to better understand how institutional contexts affect these peer dynamics, more research needs to be conducted within the secondary classroom. For instance, future studies could compare how the peer dynamics surrounding students' writing changes from high school to college. Additionally, action research projects could be designed to develop community building strategies within high schools and evaluate their effects on the peer dynamics surrounding writing. As this study has shown, peers act as powerful sponsors of literacy that can both enable and constrain each others' writing. Further research in this area, then, could help under resourced schools provide better social supports for student writing.

So far, I've discussed how this study provides to a better understanding of the intersections between material resources, teachers, peers, and curricula that shape students' writing practices. However, as illustrated within chapter 6, these more immediate social interactions surrounding writing were also often influenced by broader institutional policies, such as tracking or mixed ability grouping. This study, then, complements existing research that has shown how tracking can constrict writing instruction for linguistically and culturally diverse students (Enright, 2013; Enright & Gilliland, 2011; Fu, 1995; Harklau, 1994; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2012). However, by presenting students' writing practices across institutional contexts, it also extends this work by showing the positive outcomes that can be associated with alternative policies, such as mixed ability grouping. Case studies comparing diverse students' experiences with writing in tracked and untracked high schools could further elucidate these relationships. Such research would be valuable in helping high school teachers and administrators explore more effective strategies for grouping and course placement.

While tracking is an issue associated primarily with secondary schools, postsecondary institutions have their own methods for segregating students on the basis of ability and

native-language background, such as placement tests and remedial coursework. These forms of academic segregation can be just as pernicious as tracking. Research has shown, for instance, that linguistic minorities are often segregated into non-credit bearing ESL and developmental courses that can lead to stigmatization, alienation, and insufficient access to financial resources, all risk factors for attrition (Lay et al, 1999; Shapiro, 2012). While the current study has focused on participants' experiences with academic writing during the UB summer program, their senior year of high school, and the admissions process, the impact of past institutional identities and levels of preparation can potentially follow them into college.

For instance, as I will discuss within the epilogue, both Jared and Gabrielle were placed within ESL sections of First-Year Composition based on scores from a standardized assessment they took at the end of twelfth grade. These outcomes suggest potential mismatches between high schools' and colleges' expectations surrounding English proficiency and academic literacy, as both students had "tested out" of ESL and were taking college preparatory coursework by their senior year of high school. While these courses can be effective in helping multilingual students succeed in future coursework, both this and other studies have suggested that such students can also benefit from being in courses that mix linguistic backgrounds and ability levels (Matsuda & Silva, 2009). Furthermore, many other students share this experience of being deemed "proficient" in high school, only to be placed in developmental or second-language writing courses upon entering college (Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2006). Because academic literacies take time to develop, pre-college outreach and other transitional programs may not be enough to close the gap between these institutions.

In many ways, these five participants are the success stories; they have navigated the first part of a critical juncture by completing high school, applying to, and enrolling in college. However their continued success depends largely on their first-year experiences, in which First-Year Composition (FYC) plays a significant part. Unless writing program

administrators and FYC instructors are prepared to integrate first-generation college students into the social fabric of the university while simultaneously addressing their unique needs, they may continue along or be reassigned to marginalized trajectories. Therefore, in the next section, I point to recent policy shifts in writing program administration and FYC, highlighting their intersections with the findings of this study.

Implications for FYC and WPAs

Based on the growing body of research that has documented the negative effects of academic segregation, the CCCC Statement of Second Language Writers and Writing (2009) has advocated for directed self-placement (DSP) and multiple placement options for multilingual writers. Similarly, DSP and new alternatives to remedial coursework have become increasingly popular in developmental writing and literacy programs. In what follows, I briefly explain these policies, discussing the ways in which they overlap with UB practices and can potentially support first-generation college students' transitions. I also point to the questions this study raises regarding such policies.

Students' experiences in FYC are strongly influenced by the placement procedures used within their postsecondary institution's writing program. Given the significance of this decision, the assessments used to determine such placements have faced considerable scrutiny in terms of their validity and reliability, the appropriateness and consistency of the measure. The field of composition has questioned the validity and reliability of traditional assessments used for placement decisions—e.g. multiple choice grammar and usage exams, holistically-scored essay tests. A third option, portfolios, can have higher levels of validity and reliability but has often raised concerns regarding cost and feasibility (Yancey 1999).

Responding to these challenges and students' resistance to compulsory placements, a growing number of writing programs have shifted towards DSP, a process through which students make their own placement decisions based on information from surveys,

presentations, brochures, or advisors. Proponents see DSP as valid measure for both native and non-native English speakers and claim it gives students agency over their learning (Crusan, 2011; Roberge, 2009; Royer & Gilles, 2003). However, others have raised concerns over the validity of this self-assessment. Gere et al. (2003), for instance, have questioned the validity of DSP procedures at the University of Michigan, based on the assessment's emphasis on past experience over future demands, limited influence on students' decisions, and lack of nuance in categorizing student ability. This study has raised similar concerns regarding the need for a nuanced perspective on student ability. The participants' often did not fit within their high school's rigid categories of ability, expressing needs that seemed to fall between the different levels. As these students' move into college, it may be difficult to determine how to weigh different assessment items or what cut-off points to use for placement referrals. Such challenges may undermine students' ability to make informed decisions about courses. More research across different types of institutions is needed to determine how effective these assessments are at identifying students' needs and matching them to the corresponding course. Additionally, future studies may also investigate the predictive validity of DSP items that are based on students' high school writing experiences, since these may or may not be aligned with the demands of FYC.

Additionally, research has shown that students' responses on DSPs are heavily influenced by anxiety, confidence, and motivation and that these factors can better predict a student's performance than skills-based questions (Blakesely, Harvey, and Reynolds, 2003; Cornell & Newton). As this study has shown, students' writerly identities are fluid, dynamic, and responsive to the level of challenge they face, amount of support they receive, and type of response they experience. For this reason, programs may benefit from future research that measures the reliability of student responses over time, especially when there is a lapse between self-assessment and registration.

Of course, DSP's success is tied to the availability of courses that meet student needs. Unfortunately, due to funding and staffing constraints, many programs have limited options, which typically include, mainstream, remedial, and ESL sections of FYC. Linguistically and culturally diverse students in mainstream courses may be left to sink or swim while ESL and remedial courses can push them to the peripheries of the institution where they may be denied college credit or opportunities to interact with native English speakers (Silva, 1994). Noting the limitations of these placements, several new options have been developed to meet diverse students' unique needs while also integrating them into the university.

At Purdue University, administrators have addressed this objective by creating cross-cultural composition courses that seek to integrate native and non-native English speakers. Course assignments addressed the topic of cross-cultural communication and students worked collaboratively in mixed groups to gain the benefits of diverse perspectives. In other words, assignments were structured in such a way that language diversity became a resource, not a liability. Furthermore, this course created a safe space for multilingual students by opening opportunities to discuss potential cultural misunderstandings (Reichert & Silva, 1995-1996; Silva & Matsuda, 1999).

As discussed within Chapter 5, UB took a similar approach to creating inclusive social and academic communities by purposively mixing diverse students while also giving them tools for successful communication and collaboration. In addition to the "No Discount" policy and ceremony, UB fostered a sense of safety and community through team building exercises, group discussions, and other collaborative problem solving exercises. In both UB and cross-cultural composition, these strategies yielded both academic and social benefits. For instance, linguistically diverse students in both this course and UB felt more comfortable speaking in class and sharing their writing because they did not fear the ridicule of native English speaking peers (Silva & Matsuda, 1999). Such approaches can also counteract

institutional and cultural divisions among students. As the participants' high school experiences reveal, academic segregation can reinforce cliques and stereotyping in and out of class. Future research may consider how academic segregation affects peer dynamics in postsecondary settings and how such social relations influence students' transitions from ESL or developmental writing courses into the mainstream institution. With college campuses becoming increasingly diverse, FYC teachers and WPAs can draw upon these models and lines of inquiry to inform course and program design.

Stretch Composition seems to be another promising development based on the characteristics of participants' in this study and the aspects of UB they found most helpful for their writing. Originally piloted at Arizona State University, the Stretch Composition model essentially took the original semester-long FYC course and stretched it out over two semesters in order to give beginning writers more time to become familiar with strategies for academic writing. Since its inception, students have earned course credits and had the opportunity to become part of a community of writers by staying with the same teachers and classmates over two semesters. Retention and pass rates have been significantly higher, especially among underrepresented populations. Student surveys also indicated that they felt their writing improved due to additional time to work their assignments, increased one-on-one attention from the instructor, and an enhanced sense of community (Glau, 1996, 2007).

Again, this program has built upon some of the same successful principles that were employed within the UB summer program. Study participants appreciated the fact that, rather than experiencing a watered-down curriculum, they received the time and support they needed to complete rigorous assignments. Additionally, most of the participants established more trusting relationships with peers as a result of their extended time together. In both UB and Stretch courses, this level of trust has been shown to enhance peer feedback. The positive outcomes within Cross-Cultural Composition, Stretch Composition, and the UB summer

program offer a powerful reminder to teachers and administrators that underrepresented students do not have to receive separate and simplified instruction. Rather, with appropriate resources and strategies, they can become a vital part of the academic community.

While this study's findings have supported many of these efforts to reposition diverse learners within composition classrooms, it has complicated others. Particularly, as I argued in the preceding chapter, translanguaging may have presented an overly optimistic view of academic audiences' uptake of diverse students' linguistic and cultural resources. It may have also over generalized students' desire to highlight their differences in writing. In this next section, I highlight the questions this study raises for translanguaging theory and lines of inquiry that can support a more nuanced perspective on these issues.

Implications for Translanguaging Scholars

This study is not alone in questioning the often uncritical uptake of translanguaging. A growing number of scholars have suggested that the field's enthusiasm for translanguaging has fueled misunderstandings about the theory, its relationship to second-language studies, and its applications to research and teaching (Atkinson, et al., 2015; Matsuda, 2014). While acknowledging translanguaging's value in highlighting diverse linguistic resources, I too think that it is important to understand some of its possible limitations. To some extent, translanguaging does point to the dimensions of power surrounding language; however, research that draws from this theoretical perspective rarely provides concrete examples of these issues at play. Rather, translanguaging researchers typically present studies in which multilingual writers are eager to highlight their differences and readers are willing to embrace them. This study offers a more nuanced perspective of linguistic and cultural differences, showing how such resources can be valued by readers and writers one moment and questioned the next. Both Jared and Marie, for instance, developed very different perspectives of their linguistic and cultural resources across time and space.

One limitation of much translingual research is that it focuses on settings, such as the investigator's own classroom, in which linguistic differences are already welcomed. While encouraging, more research is needed to understand readers' and writers' experiences negotiating these resources across a range of institutional settings. Otherwise, teachers who try to welcome these resources within the classroom will be unprepared for students' potentially mixed responses. Because the current study has followed students across contexts, it offers a valuable perspective on the complicated and varied histories that may inform students' response to such practices.

This study also complicates the belief among translingual scholars that this practice can or should challenge dominant ideologies. This goal may not always match students' purposes for using their multiple language resources. Research among multilingual writers has shown that while some tell immigrant narratives to challenge readers' stereotypes, others encourage them. Harklau (2000), Fu (1995), & Leki (1995), for instance, have found that many multilingual writers tell stereotypical immigrant narratives in order to gain sympathy and admiration from teachers. On the one hand, conforming to such stereotypes can help them perform better in class. On the other, it essentializes and homogenizes students' identities. As Marie's case study illustrated, these pressures may be intensified in high stakes writing situations, such as admissions or scholarship essays. In such circumstances, even when students may be initially reluctant to offer such exoticized performances, powerful financial incentives may trump the desire to challenge dominant ideologies. These findings suggest that teachers need to strike a delicate balance between valuing diverse resources and avoiding the type of "tourist" orientation that "others" students.

Future research can help teachers negotiate this tension by identifying why multilingual students draw on their diverse resources and when they feel exoticized as a result. Such research might also examine such phenomena from the reader's perspective,

investigating institutional audiences' responses to both stereotypical and critical representations of difference. Since writers and readers negotiate these practices, a deeper understanding of these reciprocal influences can help to identify alternatives to potentially disruptive performances. Gaining a richer perspective on these negotiations can begin to address some of the inconsistencies and mixed messages students receive as they employ these resources across institutional settings.

Toward an Integrated Support System for First-Generation College Students

Through this study, I have highlighted the challenges that first-generation college students experience with academic writing, the impact this has on their transitions from high school to college, and the support systems in place to help them. What I have revealed is a system filled with gaps and the special programs that attempt, with varied success, to fill them. This concluding chapter has identified ways in which findings from this study can address these gaps and inform a systemic approach to supporting these students' literacy development and college access. While pointing to ways in which future research may improve these interventions, I have also expressed a need for high school and college writing classrooms to be better equipped to work with these students. While the liminality of the UB programs presents certain opportunities to develop new writerly identities, it rarely effects lasting change. For a more sustainable impact, first-generation college students could particularly benefit from more equitable resources, authentic writing experiences, FYC placement options, and nuanced perspectives of linguistic and cultural diversity.

However, this type of systemic reform does not come from pre-college outreach programs, high schools, and postsecondary institutions acting as atomized units. Rather, professionals must act in an integrated fashion to better serve these students' interests. For instance, pre-college outreach programs, high schools, and colleges are all being impacted by political threats that undermine the resources required for supporting underrepresented

students' transitions to college. Joint action between these professional groups could hold more political force. Additionally, these different groups have much to offer one another. Pre-college outreach programs have insights into underserved populations and college access that could benefit high school and college writing teachers and administrators. High school and college writing teachers, on the other hand, have knowledge of students' literacy background and some of the future demands that will be placed upon them. More publications and conference organizations need to support these types of collaboration. However, English Education specialists and WPAs are in a unique position to facilitate these conversations since they often have professional connections with high school English teachers, FYC instructors, and pre-college outreach directors. Such outreach could be mutually beneficial to these different institutional sites and the students they serve.

Often times, the word transition evokes particular moments in time, graduating, stepping into the college classroom, starting a new job. This perspective fails to consider the many steps and potential pitfalls along the way. "Transitioning" would, perhaps, be a better term to show the ongoing process entailed in completing high school, entering, and succeeding in college. Indeed, this study's focus on the senior year of high school and college admissions process considers different transitional points in students' trajectories than what many readers may expect. Yet, the participants in this study, now almost finished with their first-year experiences, are still in this process of transitioning. Turning to these continued journeys, the upcoming epilogue provides a brief snapshot of their current experiences along with a brief discussion of the transitions that lie ahead.

Epilogue

Transitioning: Postsecondary Options and Ongoing Needs

Almost half of U.S. undergraduates are enrolled in a community college. Yet most of them will never earn a degree—and hardly any will do so quickly. (Hulbert, 2014)

By early spring of their senior year, all of the participants were negotiating critical decisions that would potentially affect not only their first year of college but also the remainder of their educational trajectories. At this time, most of them had finalized the college selection process and were beginning orientation and registration at their schools of choice. Like so many low-income, first-generation, linguistic minority students, the majority of these participants saw community colleges as their best option, often despite the advice of their UB advisors (Cabrera & LaNasa, 2000; Hulbert, 2014; Kanno & Harklau, 2012). Their FYC selection was more varied, presenting a range of placement procedures and options. In this parting glimpse into the educational experiences of these five participants, I offer a profile of the factors that influenced their college choice process and FYC enrollment. One month into their first semester, I also sent a follow up email to the participants asking them about the frequency and types of writing they were doing in college and how well prepared they felt to tackle these tasks. For the three participants who responded—Marie, Ariel, and Jared—I provide a brief account of their initial experiences with college level writing. In my concluding thoughts, I point to ways in which these varied institutional locations and experiences with FYC might affect their preparation with academic writing and their future transitions.

Jared

As with many of the other case-study participants, Jared had hoped to attend top-tier, selective institutions with strong pre-medical programs. Initially, expense was not a primary concern, and after researching schools at UB, he explained, “One school’s going to change my life completely, and I don’t want to be at a bad school. I want to be at a good school I like. Make it a little expensive if it has to be expensive ‘cause if I get a summer job try to pay back all my bills. If I’m happy it’s worth it (personal communication, July 23, 2013). He even applied to but was rejected from many of these schools. Even before he received the rejection letters, though, he was beginning to have second thoughts since he was afraid to be far away from his father, who was still in fragile health. He was accepted into the university that housed the UB program he attended and opted for a satellite campus for the first two years so that he could live with his mother and save money. In making this decision, he received conflicting advice from his UB advisor, who wanted him to attend the main campus, and the admissions counselor, who felt the branch location would be a more cost-effective option that would permit an easy transfer to the main site. While he was not awarded any scholarships, he explained that the subsidized loans he received from his financial aid package were more than enough to cover his tuition.

Initially, Jared had applied for the UB Bridge program, where he would have taken FYC. However, he eventually decided not to pursue an additional year in the program, citing his father’s health concerns as his reason. Instead, he worked at a local amusement park to save up money for the upcoming year. As a result, he registered for FYC at his school and, after taking a placement exam, was advised to enroll in a special ESL section. He felt this placement reflected his challenges with reading since this score was lower than that for writing. In contrast to the remedial status often attributed to the course, Jared seemed to view

it as the more rigorous option: “I feel like the regular one would be too easy for me. I kind of want to challenge myself Englishwise. I know in college you write a lot, so I want to be a better writer. In high school I didn't really write that many things” (personal communication, June 24, 2014).

Despite his belief that college writing would be more intensive, his early experiences did not seem to confirm the prediction. Out of the courses he was taking—Biology, PreCalculus, Psychology, FYC, and First-Year Seminar—he only reported writing in the latter two. Most writing assignments came in the form of weekly 500 word blog posts, although he was just beginning a research paper in FYC. In many ways, then, his early college writing experiences did not seem to present a dramatic change from high school, confirming Harklau’s (2001) observation that the transition to college does not automatically entail more advanced literacies. Despite these similarities, he expressed, “I don’t think my high school really prepared me for college writing, but UB prepared me to be more creative and myself in my writing” (personal communication October 7, 2014). In contrast to the conflicts he experienced during the admissions process, Jared’s initial transition from high school to college literacy still presented him with opportunities to “be himself” in writing. It remains to be seen if will maintain this sense of ownership as he advances into disciplinary coursework, which may provide fewer opportunities for creativity or personal expression.

Marie

Like Jared, Marie dreamed big when she initially began considering college. One of her earliest selections, for instance, included Yale. However, researching the school’s entrance requirements and cost in UB dampened her dreams:

Coming from where I’m from, we don’t have money, and me and my twin brother are going to college at the same time, so it’s going to be a hard thing

for one aunt to pay for those two. I mean, think about it, I don't want to take loans for the fact that I'm trying to become a doctor ,and doctors is like very high far away education, and it's going to take forever, so by the time I'm done with it. The loans is going to be so heavy for it feels like all I have to do is debt, debt, debt, you know. (personal communication, July 31, 2013)

These concerns regarding debt would cause Marie to eliminate her second choice as well, the institution where she attended UB. Instead, she opted for a local community college, where she elected to live on campus. Early on in her first semester, she saw this as a crucial decision, citing fewer distractions after leaving home.

As discussed in detail in chapter 6, Marie was able to secure multiple scholarships and a comprehensive financial aid package that included both loans and grants. During her freshman year, she proudly noted that she had only had to take out \$1,000 worth of loans. She also applied for a position as an RA and, an application process that required substantial amounts of writing. For Marie, then, writing continued to play an important role in helping her acquire material resources. Indeed, such resources will likely have a significant impact on her persistence since financial hardship has been cited as the main factor in attrition among linguistic minority students (Kanno & Harklau, 2012).

Marie was the only participant to enroll in the UB summer bridge program, where I was her FYC instructor. The course enrolled a mix of eleven UB participants and five students enrolled through the university. From the start, I was concerned about the challenges this particular population of students would face in completing this course in one-third the normal timeframe. For this reason, I adapted a sequenced-research paper approach (Leki, 1991) designed for L2 writers that asked students to write a personal, analytical, and researched-persuasive essay on the same topic. This approach was intended to activate students' background knowledge, help them build their academic vocabulary around a specific topic, and facilitate invention; however, Marie and many of the other students in the

course struggled to find a personally relevant topic for which they could also locate secondary sources. In the end, Marie decided to write about a grandmother who was sold as a child bride and advocate for more effective international laws regarding women's rights. Despite the challenges presented by the compressed time frame, the UB students benefitted from their supportive peer community, and Marie often played the role of "literacy broker" for the more emergent bilinguals within the class. While valuable, this tight UB network sometimes excluded the other students enrolled in the class, offering a powerful reminder of the important role teachers need to play in creating inclusive communities within mixed settings.

Beyond UB, Marie reported writing regularly in all of her first-semester classes—Communication, PC Application, Algebra, Psychology, and College Success Seminar. She listed a variety of different writing tasks for these classes, including a research paper, scavenger hunt, group papers, and an interview profile of a professional in her field, a pediatric nurse. Out of these assignments, she found the profile most valuable. She complained that "my high school did not prepare me for college. All they ever told me was 'in college your professor will give you a syllabus' and that's all" (personal communication October 13, 2014). Though not directly tied to her writing, Marie found UB more useful, explaining that it helped to her manage her time and have a smoother transition to college. It is significant to note that out of the three participants who responded to my follow-up, Marie reported the richest experiences writing across the curriculum. She also reported being able to meet with her professors every week. These opportunities are important to balance with the more negative views of community colleges, which have often been criticized for their high attrition rates and limited professional development opportunities for faculty (Ruecker, 2014).

Ariel

Out of the five participants, Ariel was the only to attend school on the campus where her UB program was held. This decision reflected a change from her original plan, which was to attend an out-of-state school with a strong Criminal Justice program. Her mother had pushed for a local school, and Ariel seemed somewhat conflicted between their competing interests: “[My mom’s] like, ‘You should go here because it’s a nice school,’ and I’m like, ‘Okay, cool.’ I mean it’s like my decision. I can go wherever I want, but I also kind of want to obey her” (personal communication, March 27, 2014). Like many of the other participants, then, Ariel’s college selection was heavily influenced by family ties and obligations. While the other participants felt that the state school was too expensive, Ariel did not share these concerns, noting that a combination of financial aid and family savings covered her tuition and housing.

From the start of her senior year, Ariel knew that, despite her mother’s wishes, she would not apply to the UB Bridge program. She explained to me that she wanted to do something more adventurous, like traveling to Australia over the summer. Instead, she spent the summer working overtime at her aunt’s nail salon to save money for school expenses. For her first semester in college, Ariel enrolled in two introductory psychology courses, art, and FYC. Out of all these classes, she only had writing assignments in English. Although she decided not to enroll in the summer bridge program, she experienced a similar FYC curriculum, which included a personal, analytical and researched persuasive paper. When I contacted her in the fall, she has just finished a six-page personal essay, which she found “easy” and “straightforward” to write (personal communication, October 6, 2014). The class had just started the analysis paper on Richard Wright’s *Black Boy*, an assignment she did not anticipate liking. Despite finding her first major assignment “easy” and “straightforward,”

she still reported that neither her high school nor UB had prepared her for college-level writing. While neither Jared, Marie, nor Ariel cited any specific challenges with college writing, then, all shared the general impression that they were underprepared.

Gabrielle

Even during the UB summer program, Gabrielle's college selection process was more restricted than the other participants, and she only researched local, moderately selective schools. Based on her UB advisor's urging, she later applied and was accepted to the university affiliated with the program. However, she quickly ruled it out as an option:

I mean I would love to go to [state school]. That has always been one of the top ones. I mean it's too expensive; it's just they didn't give me any scholarships, like you know what I mean. And then it's like I have to take care of my sister and not just go for four years. And my mom if I go to [state state school], you can't have your car there your freshman year. Then on the weekends, I can come, but my mom doesn't know how to drive on highways, so it would be impossible to her to go pick me up on the weekends so I can come here, and my dad's not here, so it's like [. . .]. (personal communication, February 26, 2014)

While financial aid was available, Gabrielle was concerned about debt and preferred scholarships and grants over loans. Furthermore public transportation was not a viable option for weekend visits to her family, with whom she was very close. For these reasons, she chose to live at home and commute to the same community college as Marie. She reasoned that, with the college credits she had already earned while in high school, she would be ready to transfer to a four-year university in a year and a half.

Needing a job to save money for the upcoming school year, Gabrielle did not apply for the UB bridge program. Instead, she planned to take FYC at the community college. Based on placement exams she took during orientation, she was advised to enroll in a special ESL section. Like Jared, Gabrielle did not question this placement decision. Unfortunately, I

have no follow-up data to gauge her response to and experiences in the course once the school year started.

Savannah

As Savannah first began researching colleges in UB, she was primarily interested in smaller institutions that she hoped would have the sense of community missing at her high school. At the same time, she wanted a wide range of programs and extracurricular opportunities that would allow her to explore her expanding interests. Both her teachers and UB advisor encouraged her to apply to the state university, where she gained admission. However, once her father became ill, she decided to attend a local community college so that she could work full time and care for him. Her father's illness also prevented her from applying to the UB summer bridge program as she had originally intended.

Despite these changing plans, when we last spoke Savannah was still incredibly eager to attend college. Like Jared and Gabrielle, her school used placement exams to determine students' introductory courses. However, based on her SAT scores, she was excused from the reading and writing portions. Looking forward to her upcoming registration, Savannah expressed considerable awe over all the available options: "There's a bunch of different classes I could take, and there's pretty much free reign so when I go to pick and choose my classes, I have so many options because I'm liberal arts, so I only have to take what is required, but even then, I get to pick which one I want, like my math" (personal communication, March 4, 2014). While planning to take the required FYC course, she also hoped to pursue her interests in creative writing. However, like Gabrielle, I was unable to contact Savannah to see if she followed through with these plans or what her early experiences were like.

Discussion

These participants' transitions to college suggest that this population of students may experience less control over college choice and FYC placements than their more privileged peers. While four year institutions are technically an option for these students, high costs and inflexibility pose barriers. Many of the participants, for instance, believed that attending the state university would compromise their financial futures and family obligations. Cabrera & LaNasa (2000) have analyzed whether financial aid provides equal opportunities in college choice to low-income students. While noting that the poorest students are significantly more likely to attend two year institutions, they note this trend may be due to poor academic preparation and limited awareness of financial aid. The current study complicates these findings. While academic preparation kept these participants out of more selective institutions, high costs still deterred them from public universities regardless of their qualifications. Forms of financial aid, such as loans, may not be enough to balance these inequalities due to increasing concerns regarding student debt. These students needed greater access to grants and scholarships to equalize the college choice process, and Marie's account illustrates that writing can help students obtain these important financial resources. However, these forms of writing can also present conflicts. As I've argued here, one way high school English teachers can enhance college access is by helping students negotiate these conflicts. However, since financial concerns will likely plague these students throughout college and can often lead to attrition, they may also need continued support from college composition teachers and writing centers to compete for scholarships.

While finances and family obligations most directly impacted participants' college choice, native-language background largely determined placement in FYC. Among the four students who took FYC outside UB, those with the lowest English proficiency, Jared and

Gabrielle, also had the least control over their placement options. ESL sections of FYC can be appropriate options, and neither participant disagreed with their placements. However, these limited options in college choice and course selection still have some disturbing implications. It is important to note that the participants in this study were highly motivated students who largely “bought in” to the educational system. Students already disillusioned by traditional forms of schooling may become increasingly alienated as a result of such inequalities.

Finally, the variations in these students’ institutional placements and early experiences with college writing suggest that they will need sustained support, especially since so many of them will require future transitions between two and four-year institutions. As much as the transition from high school to college, the shift from community colleges to universities frequently disrupts or curtails this population’s educational trajectories (Hulbert, 2014; Kanno & Harklau, 2012; Ruecker, 2014). Too often, the transition to college is viewed as an event that occurs somewhere within the senior year of high school and freshman year of college. Yet, this study has suggested that this experience cannot be neatly parceled out from students’ earlier experiences in high school, and more research is needed to explore transitional moments in college. Moving beyond a view that treats transitions as discrete moments in time, we will be better equipped to help these students gain the level of writing proficiency they need to persist towards a degree.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Consent and Assent Forms

Straight from the Source: Students Share Their Experiences on Writing in Upward Bound and High School

Date:

Dear Parent,

Working with your child as part of my dissertation research has been such a pleasure and has helped me learn so much about how experiences at Upward Bound prepare students for their college goals. I had the opportunity to see your child prepare a college admissions essay and use internet research to compare possible colleges, and I cannot wait to see how these and other skills developed this summer help with upcoming college preparations. For this reason, I would like to continue to work with your child and 4-6 other UB students, to see how the abilities they gained this summer and in other activities shape their experiences with writing during the school year.

If your child wishes to participate in this study, this is what he or she would do:

- **Individual Interviews:**

A) *Seven-Nine Interviews* (30-45 min) throughout the school year. These interviews will occur at a public space that you and your child will choose.

B) *Audiorecording of the interviews:* I would like to tape these interviews. I will listen to these tapes, type up what was said, and destroy the recording once the study is complete.

- **Focus Group:** (90 min) This meeting will occur within the last two months of school at the University of New Hampshire-Manchester and will include other UB students who are participating in this study. During the 90 min., your child will also be able to share pizza and soft drinks with some of their friends from this summer. I would like to tape these interviews. I will listen to these tapes, type up what was said, and destroy the recording once the study is complete.
- **Literacy Map:** this is a diagram that shows the people, places, events, things, and values that influence your child's literacy. This will be completed during the first interview of the school year, so it will not require any additional time.

- **Observations and Writing Samples:** Your child will be observed while participating in classes that require a significant amount of writing. Your child will share drafts of writing for these classes as well as teacher comments on those drafts.
- **Report Card, SAT/ACT Writing Score:** Your child will share this with me at the end of the school year in order to discuss how UB impacted their school year and college admissions.
- This would take, at most, 8 1/2 hours of your child's time over the course of the school year, and they will be compensated for their time: \$25 for the first semester, and scale; \$25 for the second semester (\$50 total)

All of these documents will be scanned and returned to your child. The electronic copies of these documents will be stored on my personal computer and in my home office with the notes I take from observations.

Information will be used for my future work, including articles/books submitted for publication, presentations, and dissertation writing. When presenting this information, I will use a fake name instead of your child's real name. If your child reveals information about him/herself or others that can be used for identification, I will either change or leave out these details. Only my faculty advisor, a transcriptionist, and I will have access to the identifiable information, unless other individuals must access this information for certain reasons. If there are complaints about the study, the UNH Institutional Review Board and the school's administrators may access the information; also, NH state law requires that certain information be reported to government and/or law enforcement officials (e.g. suspected child abuse/neglect, threatened violence to self/others). Additionally, during the focus group, while I plan to maintain confidentiality of your child's responses, other focus group participants may repeat responses outside the focus group setting

Since I will need your principal and teacher's permission to observe your high school classes, they will know that you are participating in a writing student with Upward Bound students. Giving consent for your child to participate in the study is voluntary and refusal to allow your child to participate in the study will not impact their eligibility to participate in the Upward Bound program or any high school activities. You may withdraw your child from the study at any time without penalty. Students in this study will have the opportunity to learn about themselves as writers, reflect on shared experiences with friends from Upward Bound, and will help teachers become better at helping students to prepare to write for college.

If you have questions about this study, you may speak to me by phone 603-617-6853 or via email shaunawight@gmail.com. If you have questions about your child's rights as a participant in a research study, you may contact Julie Simpson from the UNH Research Integrity Services by phone (603-862-2003) or email (Julie.simpson@unh.edu). Keep one

copy of this form for your records and return one to me. Students should also sign the separate, attached form if they want to participate.

Thank you,

Shauna Wight

Student's Name (Printed)_____ Parent's Name (Printed)_____

Parent Signature:_____ Date:_____

Indicate any activities in which the student may participate. Check all that apply.

Student Interviews with audiorecordings Literacy Map, Observations, Share Writing Samples, Focus Group with audiorecordings, Share written teacher feedback, Share final report card and SAT/ACT writing score.

Straight from the Source: Students Share Their Experiences on Writing in Upward Bound and High School.

Date:

Dear Upward Bound Student,

I really enjoyed working with you this summer. You were so generous with your time and your insights, and you have helped me to understand how your experiences with writing in different settings shape how you approach each piece of writing. I would love to continue working with you and 4-6 other students to hear more of your story as you complete your last year of high school and look forward to an exciting future.

If you wish to participate, this is what you would do:

- **Individual Interviews:**

A) *Seven-Nine Interviews* (30-45 min) throughout the school year. These interviews will occur at a public space that you and your parent will choose.

B) *Audiorecording of the interviews:* I would like to tape these interviews. I will listen to these tapes, type up what was said (or have a transcriptionist type them), and destroy the recording once the study is complete.

- **Focus Group:** (90 min) This meeting will occur this spring at the University of New Hampshire-Manchester and will include other UB students who are participating in this study. During the 90 min., you will also be able to share pizza and soft drinks with some of your friends from this summer. I would like to tape this focus group session. I will listen to these tapes, type up what was said, and destroy the recording once the study is complete.
- **Literacy Map:** this is a diagram that shows the people, places, events, things, and values that influence your literacy. This will be completed during the first interview of the school year, so it will not require any additional time.
- **Observations and Writing Samples:** You will be observed while participating in classes that require a significant amount of writing. You will share drafts of writing for these classes as well as teacher comments on those drafts.
- **Report Card, SAT/ACT Writing Score:** You will share this with me at the end of the school year in order to discuss how UB impacted your school year and college admissions.

This would take, at most, 8 ½-11 hours of your time over the course of the school year, and you will be compensated for your time: \$25 for completing all of the activities during the first semester; \$25 for completing all of the activities during the second semester (\$50 total)

All the documents I collect will be scanned and returned to you. The electronic copies of the documents will be stored on my personal computer and in my home office with the notes I take from observations.

Information will be used for my future work, including articles/books submitted for publication, presentations, and dissertation writing. When presenting this information, I will use a fake name instead of your real name. If you reveal information about yourself or others that can be used for identification, I will either change or leave out these details. Only my faculty advisor, my transcriptionist, and I will have access to identifiable information, unless other individuals must access this information for certain reasons. If there are complaints about the study, the UNH Institutional Review Board and the school's administrators may access the information; also, NH state law requires that certain information be reported to government and/or law enforcement officials (e.g. suspected child abuse/neglect, threatened violence to self/others). Additionally, during the focus group, while I plan to maintain confidentiality of your responses, other focus group participants may repeat responses outside the focus group setting.

Since I will need permission from your principal and teachers to observe your high school classes, they will know that you are participating in a writing study with Upward Bound students. Participation in the study is voluntary and refusal to take part in it will not impact your eligibility for the Upward Bound program or any high school activities or services; you may withdraw at any time without penalty. Participating in this study is expected to present minimal risk to you. By participating in this study, you will have the opportunity to reflect upon how your writing will impact your future educational and professional goals; you may also help teachers improve their writing instruction.

If you have questions about this study, you may speak to me by phone 603-617-6853 or via email shaunawight@gmail.com. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research study, you may contact Julie Simpson from the UNH Research Integrity Services by phone (603-862-2003) or email (Julie.simpson@unh.edu). Please keep one copy of this form and return one to me. Thank you,

Shauna Wight

Student's Name (Printed) _____ Parent's Name (Printed) _____

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please indicate the activities in which you are willing to participate. Check all that apply.

__Student Interviews with audiorecordings, __Confidence Scales,___Drawings
__Observations, __Share Writing Samples, _____English class Evaluations

Appendix B

Demographic Questionnaire

1. Year in school
2. Year in program
3. Place of birth
4. Current grade in school (i.e. junior, senior, high school graduate):
5. Place where you were raised (have spent the majority of your life)
If raised outside the U.S., how long did you live there, what grades did you attend while there?
6. Race
7. Gender

Please use the chart to tell me what languages you know. (Don't include any languages that you only studied as a school subject.) Tell me how well you understand, read, speak, and write these languages by circling the appropriate number that corresponds to the following:
1=well 2=some 3=not much

Language	Understand	Speak	Read	Write
1				
2				
3				

Appendix C

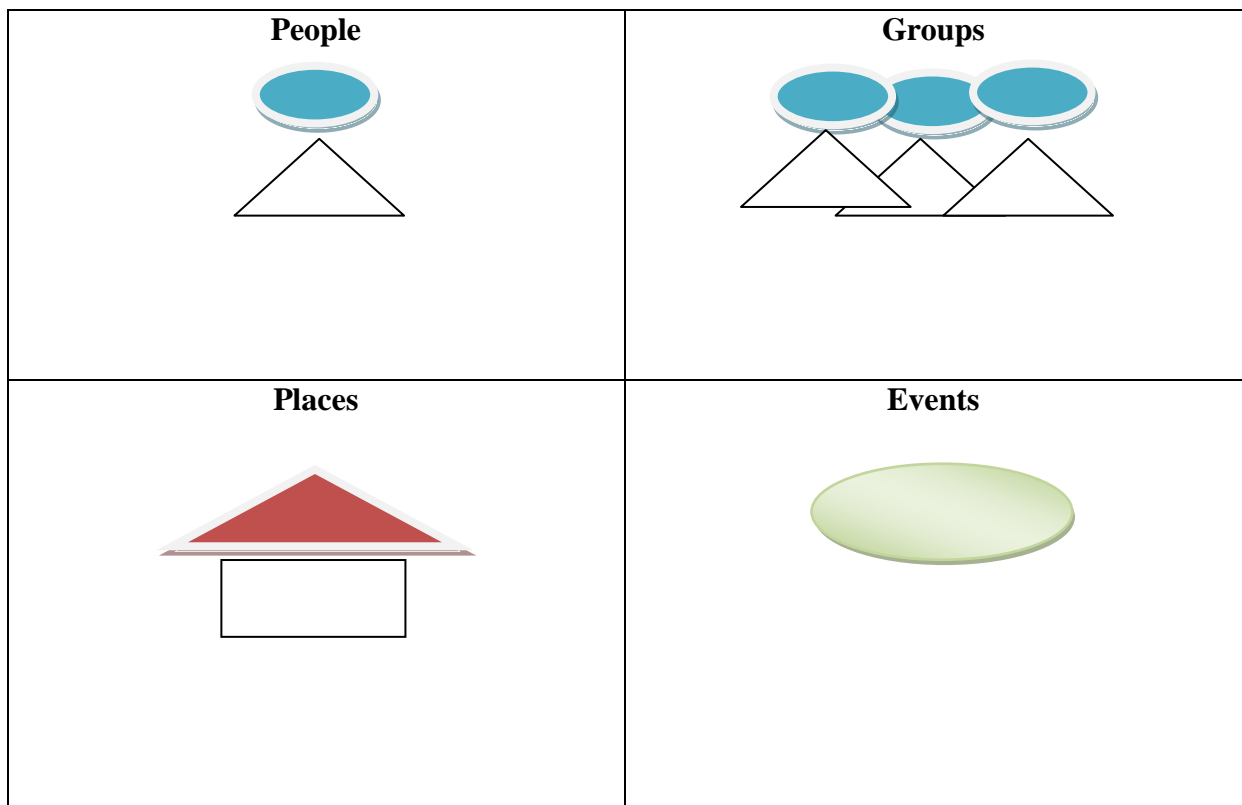
Literacy Resources Map

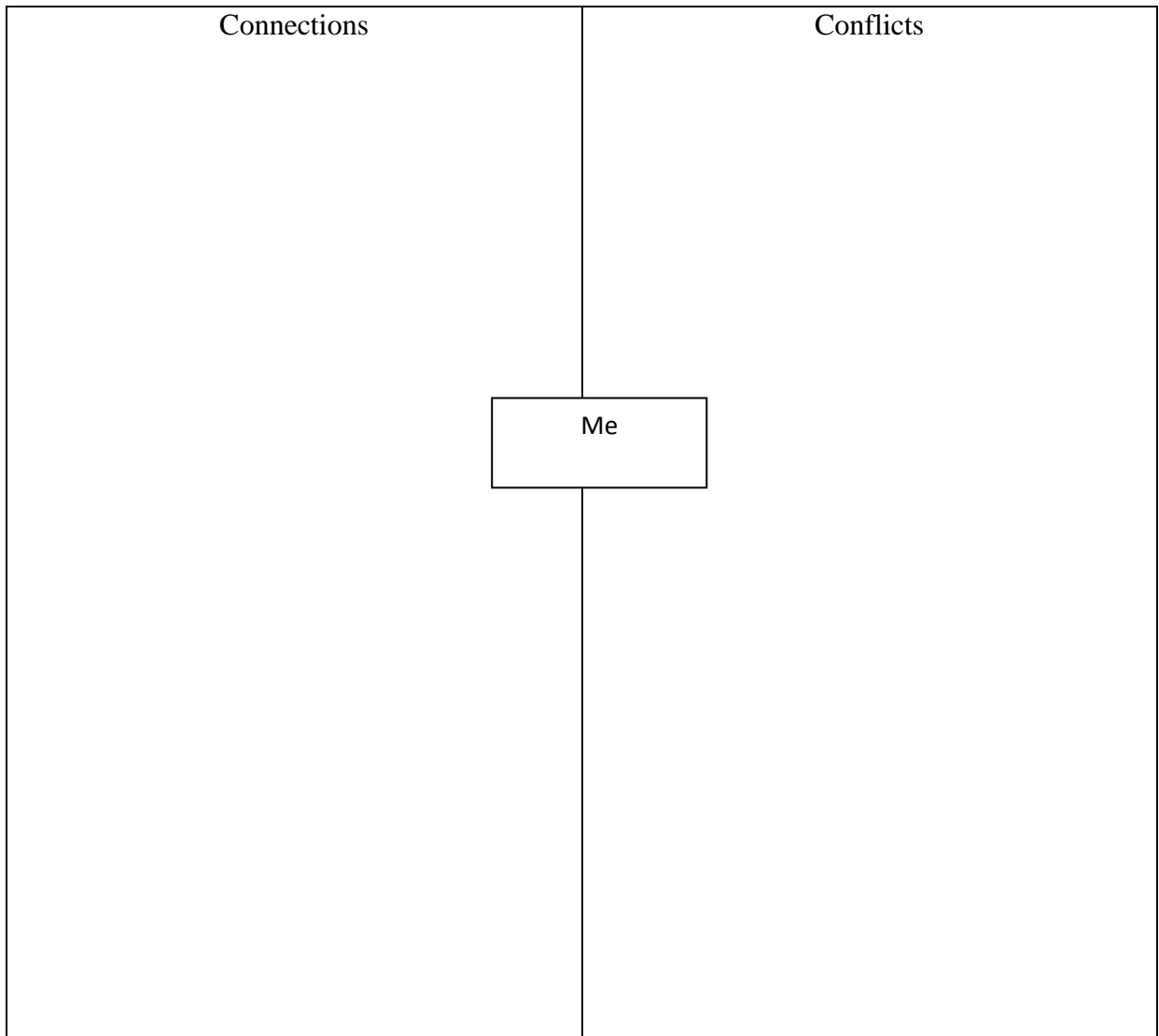
Procedures:

Step 1: I will have envelopes filled with ten colored cut outs for each of the six icons (see Figure 1 below)—individual people, groups of people, spaces, events, things, and values/goals. I will also have an example started that I can show them.

Step 2: Participants will be asked to use as many of the icons as they need to in order to label people, groups, spaces, events, things, and values/goals that either contribute to their schoolwork and school writing or compete with it.

Step 3: Students will receive Figure 2, and will be asked to paste icons that contribute to their school work and school writing on one side and icons that detract from these things on the opposite side. They will be instructed to put the icons they consider most important closest to the figure that represents them at the center of the page.





Appendix D

Confidence Scales

Directions: On a scale from 0 (no chance) to 10 (completely certain), how confident are you of being able to successfully communicate, in written English, what you want to say in each of the following writing tasks. You may select any number between 1 and 10.

- ___1. Write a letter to a friend or family member.
- ___2. Fill out a college application.
- ___3. Fill out a financial aid application.
- ___4. Write a college admissions essay
- ___5. Write an essay for a high school English class.
- ___6. Write a term paper of 15 to 20 pages.
- ___7. Write class notes.
- ___8. Respond to an essay question on an exam.
- ___7. Write a one or two sentence answer to a test question.
- ___9. Write a short story
- ___10. Write a poem or song lyrics.
- ___11. Participate on an online chat or social networking site.

Appendix E

Interview Protocols

Student Interview Questions Before the Summer Program

1. What were your earliest memories of seeing other people write?
2. How often and when do you see family members or other people with whom you live write? What types of writing do they do?
3. Who are people in your life that you associate with writing?
4. What types of reading do you do at home?
5. Whom do you usually write to or for? How often do you share writing with others and how do you feel while sharing it?
6. How many hours each week do you spend writing for school and for yourself, friends, and family?
7. Are there types of writing (essays, letters, personal, notes, stories, poems, raps) you like more than others, if so, what?
8. In what ways do you use reading or writing while surfing the web or texting friends?
9. When communicating with others, how often do you rely on visuals (emoticons, photos, drawings, film), speaking, music, or physical actions?
10. What are some of the effects of your writing (Does writing help you solve problems? Feel better? Form relationships?)
11. What grades do you usually get in your high school English classes?

Student Interview Questions During the Summer Program

1. What classroom activities helped you write this assignment?
2. What do you think the instructor expected to see with this assignment?
3. Did anyone help you to develop or change this paper?
4. Was this comment from peer/teacher/student helpful? How?
5. Which version of the text do you think is better (show them a selection from their original draft and one with suggested revisions by a teacher, tutor, or peer). Why?
6. How do you think you did on this paper? Did you meet the instructor's expectations?
7. What would you do the same or differently next time?
8. If you could change something about this paper, what would it be?
9. How comfortable were you or would you be sharing this with teachers/tutors/peers?
10. Where did you get the idea for this paper?
11. What did you like/dislike about this assignment?
12. How does the No Discount Policy affect your experiences in English? Would you like to see a similar policy in your high school? Do you think it could work?

13. Describe how your group worked together to complete the tasks during problem solving day? What role did reading writing play in those tasks? How was the reading writing you did on that day similar or different from what you usually do in classes? How was it similar or different from the reading and writing you do on your own? What did you like or dislike about the experience?

Student Questions After the Summer Program

1. How many hours per week did you typically spend writing outside of class during your six weeks in the UB summer program? Is this more or less than the school year?
2. What types of writing (essays, notes, poems, stories) do you spend the most time producing at UB?
3. What were your favorite things to read while at UB?
4. How does the difficulty and amount of reading you did in your English class with UB compare to your high school English class?
5. Tell me about the best piece of writing you produced for your UB English classroom?
6. What piece of writing did you enjoy the most/least? Tell me about it?
7. What were similarities and differences between writing for your UB English class and the English class in your high school?
8. What resources (friends, teachers, tutors, computers, books, classroom activities) helped you with your writing at UB?
9. Did you do more or less writing for your English class at UB than you did in your high school English class?
10. What do UB English teachers expect writing to be like? What do you think they find most important when grading your papers (grammar, spelling, ideas, organization)?
11. What did your high school teacher expect writing to be like? What do you think they find most important when grading your papers (grammar, spelling, ideas, organization)?
12. What do you think that college teachers expect writing to be like? What do you think they find most important when grading your papers (grammar, spelling, ideas, organization)?
13. How often (number of hours) did you read or write just for fun during the program. Give me examples.
14. Explain the writing/drawing prompt
15. What grade do you expect to receive in your summer UB class? Do you think this grade is an accurate reflection of your writing abilities?

Student Questions During the School Year

1. What is the purpose of this assignment? What will you be able to do after having completed the assignment? Ask them to identify places in the text where they have met the purpose well and places where they could do this better.
Audience:
2. Who has read this piece? If someone has already read it, proceed to the following questions:
 - Where on your literacy map does this person fit?
 - What was the reaction you were hoping for?

- What did you do in this paper to try to get that kind of response? (Turn to student text).
 - Point out some places where you've done that really well?
 - Why do you think this is a good example of what you were trying to do in this paper?
 - (Turn to literacy map). Point out items on this map that helped you learn how to do this.
 - What was the person's actual reaction?
 - What places in the text do you think led to that reaction, and why did you write the section in this way?
 - If the reader's response was not what they had hoped, ask why the student thinks they responded differently than desired and what they did change or would consider changing to get the desired response. Ask them why they think the change would or did get the desired response. Ask them if they like it better with or without the change and why?
 - If multiple people have read the piece, what were some of the similarities and differences in their reactions? Explain why they had similar or different reactions. Are these people from different places on your literacy map? If so, how might these different places influence their response? Which of these readers influenced their decisions more?
3. What places in your paper were influenced by something that someone else has written (examples, articles, books, handouts, internet sources that you read in class or on your own). Have them actually point to places in the text.
 4. What changes did you make from the original, if any?
 5. Why did you make the changes you did, or why did you leave it the same?
 6. Which do you think sounds best, your text or the original source? Why?

Retrospective Accounts of the Writing Process

1. Describe what the assignment was for this piece of writing? What will you be able to do after having completed the assignment?
2. What, if anything, was unclear about the assignment?
3. If the assignment was unclear, what did you do to understand it better?
4. What aspects of this assignment might make it easier for some students and harder for others?
5. Was the topic assigned or chosen?
6. If the topic was chosen for you, what do you like or dislike about it?
7. If you chose the topic, why did you choose this topic? How did you choose it? What other topics did you consider? Why did you choose this one instead of other potential topics?
8. What did you know about this topic before you started the assignment?
9. (Use literacy map here) If you were already familiar with this topic, what items on the literacy map helped you to learn about it?
10. What were your goals when writing this assignment?
11. (Use literacy map here) How did your goals for writing this paper connect to or conflict with some of the goals you included on the literacy map.
12. How much time did you spend planning the paper? Where on your literacy map did you do this planning? How much time did you spend planning at each of these locations? What types of planning did you do at each location? Who helped you

- plan? What items helped you plan? What values influenced your planning? Why did you plan in certain places or use certain people or things to help you plan?
13. How much time did you spend drafting the paper? Where on your literacy map did you do this drafting? How much time did you spend drafting at each of these locations? Who helped you with the actual writing? What items helped you write? What values influenced your writing? Why did you write in certain places or use certain people or things to help you write?
 14. How much time did you spend revising the paper (making large changes in content, purpose, organization)? Where on your literacy map did you do this revising? How much time did you spend revising at each of these locations? Who helped you with the actual revisions? What items helped you revise? What values influenced your revisions? Why did you write in certain places or use certain people or things to help you revise?
 15. How much time did you spend editing the paper (changing wording, grammar, spelling, punctuation)? Where on your literacy map did you do this editing? Who or what helped you edit the paper?
 16. What was the most useful resource (person, people, thing, place, value) you used to help you write this paper? Where is it or where would it go on your literacy map?
 17. What did you do especially well on this paper? (Using literacy map) Where else do you use this strength?
 18. What would you do differently next time?
 19. What advice would you give to other students completing this assignment?
 20. What advice would you give to the teacher to make the assignment clearer, more interesting, and helpful?

Student Focus Group Questions

- What, in your opinion, are the most important things high school students should do or know in order to get into college, and what experiences have influenced your opinion.
- How much writing do you do in your classes, and do you think the preparation you have gotten will help you succeed in college? Why or why not?
- Do you feel like your teachers just give you writing assignments to complete or do they actually teach you how to write? Why do you feel this way?
- Where in high school do you usually get information or advice that will help you prepare for or get into college? Do you think all of the students in your school have equal access to this help? Why or why not?
- How much help did you get in preparing for the writing section of the SAT/ACT? How did it help you? What other help preparing do you wish you would have gotten?
- What do your schools need to do differently to help more kids want to go to college and to succeed in getting there?
- Some of you have told me that a lot of students in your schools are less motivated than UB? Why do you think that is? What should your schools do differently to motivate these kids?
- If kids in your school were more motivated, how would that influence your own motivation? How do you think it would impact your writing?
- Do you think that the No Discount Policy helps people feel safe enough to be themselves or do you think that it makes people dishonest/fake? Explain.

- Describe how participating in UB has influenced a). your writing and b). your academic future, and c). how is writing connected to your future.

UB Teacher Questions

1. Have you taught before? When? Where? What?
2. Based on the students' pretests and your work with them what aspects of writing do they seem to struggle with the most?
3. If the teacher has taught before, ask the teacher what is similar and different between teaching for UB and other teaching they have done.
4. How much classroom time do you spend on writing during the summer program? How does this compare to other contexts in which you've taught?
5. What role do multiple modalities (visual, aural, gestural) play in your classroom?
6. How comfortable are you with allowing students to read/write/speak in a language other than English during your class?
7. How would you describe reading and writing in college English?
8. What abilities are you emphasizing with each assignment in this summer class?
9. What training or previous experience do you have working with minority or ESL students?
10. What were your goals and objectives when creating the syllabus or designing (use writing prompts collected from teacher) this prompt? How do these objectives tie into how you view college literacy?
11. Do you see race, gender, or native language background affecting students' interactions with peers in class? Tell me about it? What resources and challenges do ESL teachers bring with them to class?
12. What role do the Common Core Standards for ELA or standardized tests play in the curriculum you designed for this summer?

Advisor Questions

1. How long have you worked with the UB program?
2. In what other educational contexts have you been employed?
3. What role do you see yourself and the UB program playing in students' literacy development?
4. What literacy tasks or skills do you consider most important for helping students enroll and succeed in college?
5. What are some of the particular challenges this population of students face?
6. What factors (e.g. political influences, budget constraints, federal policies) affect your ability to sponsor students' literacy development and college access?
7. What are your impressions of _____ as a student?
8. What are your impressions of _____ as a writer?
9. In what ways has this student changed in the time you have known him/her?

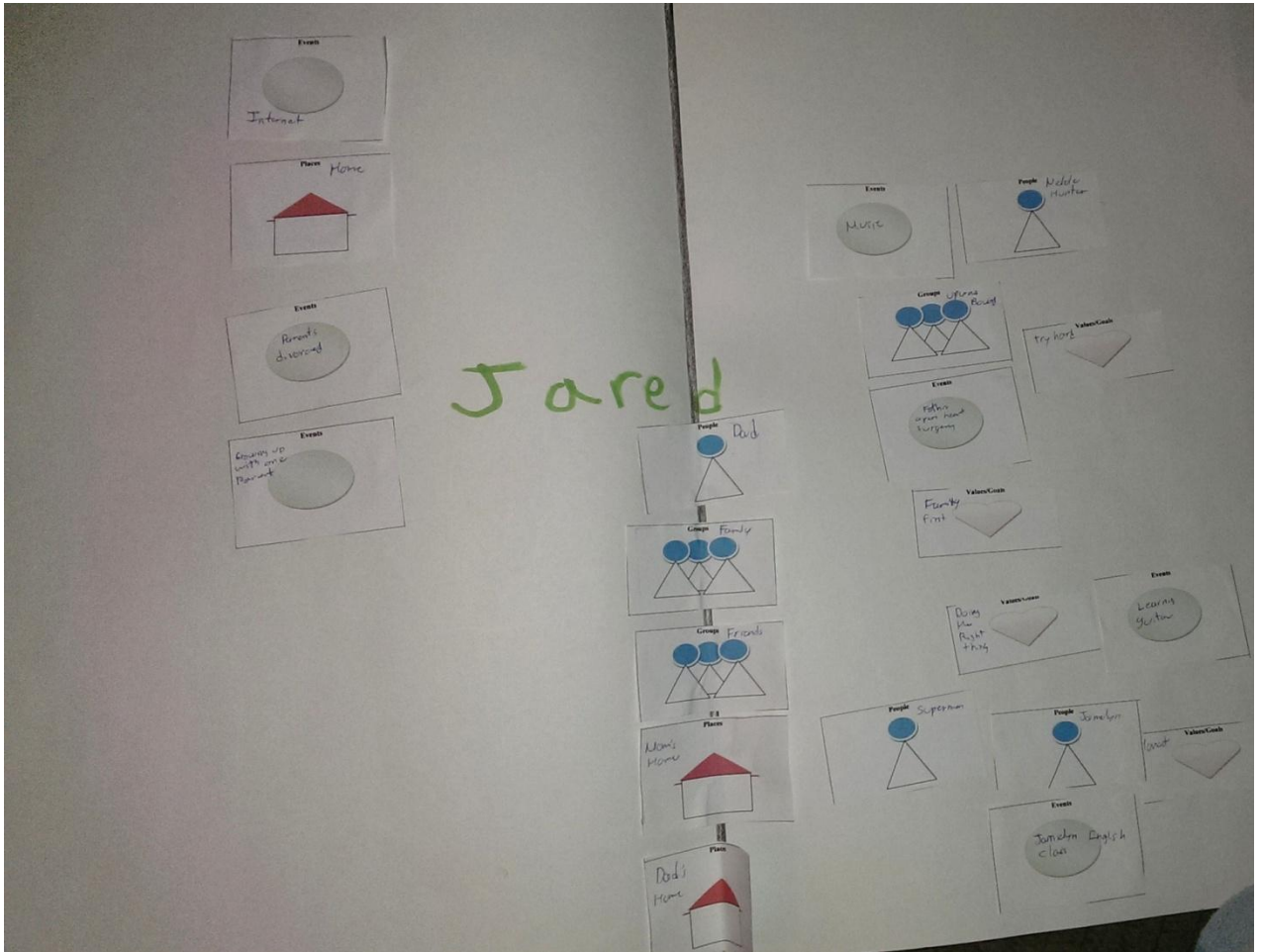
High School Teacher Interview Questions

1. What courses, grade levels, and sections (e.g. honors, general) have you taught or do you typically teach.
2. How do school/district policies (e.g. curricular maps, rubrics, benchmark assignments) and conditions (e.g. class sizes, resources) affect the way in which you prepare students for the writing you think they will do in college?

3. What factor's (e.g. teacher recommendations, test scores, previous coursework) influence students' registration for English courses at your school?
4. Are there specific concerns that you have about preparing first-generation college students or ESL students at your school for college writing?
5. What are your impressions of Student as a student? How actively does she participate in class?
6. What are your impressions of Student as a writer? What is her writing process like; what are her strengths as a writer; what does she need to continue to work on in order to prepare for college.
6. What, if any, information have you gotten from Upward Bound about the Student's participation in the program? If you have gotten information about Student's participation in Upward Bound, how has this information influenced your perceptions of or interactions with Student?

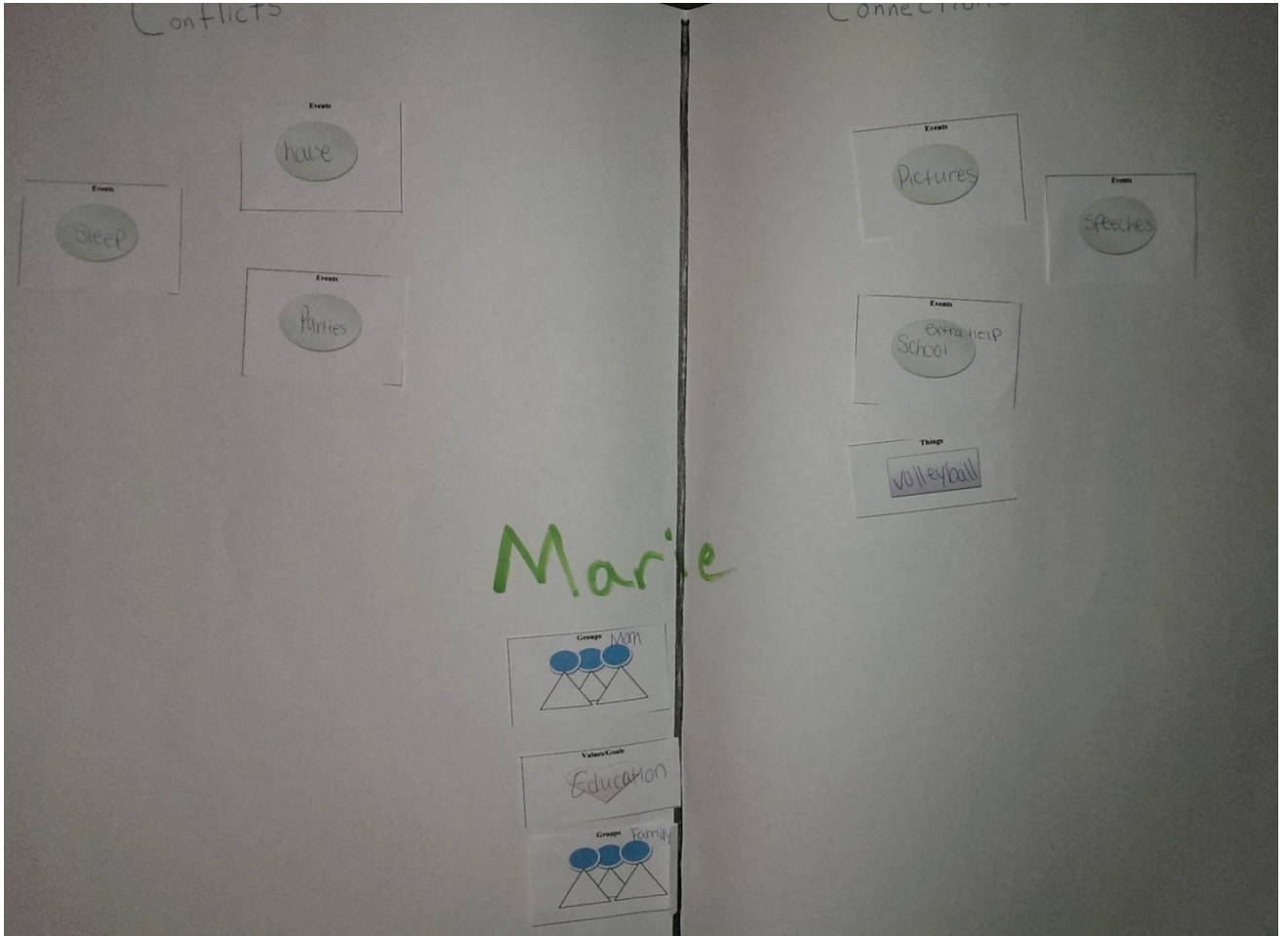
Appendix F

Jared's Literacy Resource Map



Appendix G

Marie's Literacy Resource Map



Appendix H: IRB Letter

University of New Hampshire

Research Integrity Services, Service Building
51 College Road, Durham, NH 03824-3585
Fax: 603-862-3564

04-Apr-2013

Wight, Shauna
English, Hamilton Smith Hall
323 Forest Park
Durham, NH 03824

IRB #: 5708

Study: Student Writers in Upward Bound

Approval Date: 03-Apr-2013


The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB) has reviewed and approved the protocol for your study as Exempt as described in Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 46, Subsection 101(b). Approval is granted to conduct your study as described in your protocol.

Researchers who conduct studies involving human subjects have responsibilities as outlined in the attached document, *Responsibilities of Directors of Research Studies Involving Human Subjects*. (This document is also available at <http://unh.edu/research/irb-application-resources>.) Please read this document carefully before commencing your work involving human subjects.

Upon completion of your study, please complete the enclosed Exempt Study Final Report form and return it to this office along with a report of your findings.

If you have questions or concerns about your study or this approval, please feel free to contact me at 603-862-2003 or Julie.simpson@unh.edu. Please refer to the IRB # above in all correspondence related to this study. The IRB wishes you success with your research.

For the IRB,



Julie F. Simpson
Director

cc: File
Ortmeier, Christina

University of New Hampshire

Research Integrity Services, Service Building
51 College Road, Durham, NH 03824-3585
Fax: 603-862-3564

11-Oct-2013

Wight, Shauna
English, Hamilton Smith Hall
323 Forest Park
Durham, NH 03824

IRB #: 5708
Study: Student Writers in Upward Bound
Approval Expiration Date: 10-Oct-2014
Modification Approval Date: 10-Oct-2013
Modification: Changes per 10/1/13 request

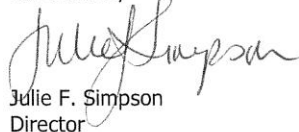
The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB) has reviewed and approved your modification to this study, as indicated above. Further changes in your study must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval prior to implementation.

Approval for this protocol expires on the date indicated above. At the end of the approval period you will be asked to submit a report with regard to the involvement of human subjects in this study. If your study is still active, you may request an extension of IRB approval.

Researchers who conduct studies involving human subjects have responsibilities as outlined in the document, *Responsibilities of Directors of Research Studies Involving Human Subjects*. This document is available at <http://unh.edu/research/irb-application-resources> or from me.

If you have questions or concerns about your study or this approval, please feel free to contact me at 603-862-2003 or Julie.simpson@unh.edu. Please refer to the IRB # above in all correspondence related to this study. The IRB wishes you success with your research.

For the IRB,



Julie F. Simpson
Director

cc: File
Ortmeier, Christina